MARVEL COMICS
JUNE
#30 $1.99
M • A • R • V • E • L
VISION
THE MARVEL FAN MAGAZINE
SENSES SHATTERING FINAL ISSUE!
A WORD WITH MARK WAID
DIALOGUE WITH PETER DAVID
ACTION FIGURES BY ART ASYLUM
JOE CASEY ON CABLE
LIQUID! COLOR GURU CHRIS LICHTNER
THE PUNISHER IN THE OLD WEST
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Beethoven born
(the composer, not the dog)
Fire extinguisher invented
(Cro-Magnons everywhere celebrate)
THE MOST GIGANTIC GOOF-UPS IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD
Rome built
(not in one day, silly)
Declaration of Independence
(and John Hancock becomes a star)
1171
The Tower of Pisa built. 1172: It starts to lean. 1172 ½: a bunch of builders look for new jobs
1492
Christopher Columbus discovers America (then gets his eyes checked—he was aiming for China, y'know)
32,000 BC
Cro-Magnon man builds first indoor fire (33,714 years before the fire extinguisher gets invented)
(hieroglyphics debut in Egypt)
1751
The Liberty Bell made by some English dude, then cracks the first time it's rung (obviously the British are tip-top at tea, pretty crummy at smelting)
Chocolate chip born
(kids everywhere celebrate)
Jurassic Period
(don't mess with T-Rex)
1998
CHIPS AHOY! FORGETS THE CHIPS!
1,000 bags of Chips Ahoy! chocolate chip cookies got out with no chips. And instead of re-naming them something lame like "Ahoys," we're offering a $1,000 reward for every chipless bag you find (that's a buck for every missing chip). Yep, this just may be the sweetest mistake ever made.
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Stan Lee Presents

MARVELVISION

Contents 30

COVER STORY

58- No one gets crazier than the gang from The Art Asylum, the folks responsible for some of the most detailed action figures ever!

FEATURE ARTICLES

10- The Micronauts are back! It's been years since the smallest heroes of all have had their own series, so sit back and get ready for the biggest threat to ever hit the Microverse!

20- Machine Man, Bastion and Cable are getting together in two very special annuals this spring that should shed light on many things, including Bastion's identity!

24- Last month we looked at the five most significant deaths in the Marvel Universe; this time we look at the five resurrections that have had the most impact.

49- Here's a rundown of the greatest comic book moments in movies from *Adventures in Babysitting* to *Reservoir Dogs*.

55- The Punisher in a western??? Yeah, it not only happened but it was a great story too! Here's what you missed if you never read "A MAN NAMED FRANK."

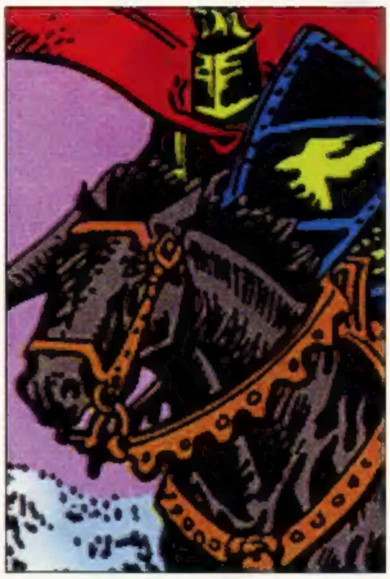
SPECIALS

13- Peter David has won fans over with his work on the INCREDIBLE HULK, X-FACTOR, and many other high-profile projects like HEROES RETURN. Here's what he had to say when VISION caught up with him.

34- Check out some of your favorite covers from the last two years and it's a safe bet Chris Lichtner and "LIQUID!" Graphics colored it. Find out how all those beautiful colors make it to you every month.

46- Joe Casey is a relatively new talent in the industry, but with his new CABLE writing assignment plenty of people have been taking notice, and so should you.

52- Mark Waid's prolific list of accomplishments from the last few years are known to every die-hard comic fan; with the recently relaunched CAPTAIN AMERICA he has continued his critically acclaimed work.



61- Are you familiar with this truly talented trio of terrific artists: Joe Maneely, Reed Crandall, and Bill Everett? Well, now you can be.

DEPARTMENTS

3- Letters to Marvel VISION
8- Amalgam fan art
16- The Daily Bugle
19- Unsung heroes Millie Shuriff
28- Time Slip: The Fantastic Four by Dan Jurgens
30- Origin of the Species: Johnny Storm
32- Marvel's Silliest Moments: Humor in Daredevil
36- Beast Files: Fantastic Four
40- Li'l Marvels
42- Big Breaks
44- Greatest Comics Never Seen: Barry Windsor-Smith
64- Marvel Chronicles: 1977 part 2
80-Farewell Cartoon by Chris Eliopoulos

COMICS GUIDE

71- Marvel Imports/Presents
72- Heroes
75- Spider-Man
76- X-Men
78- Marvel Licensed Products

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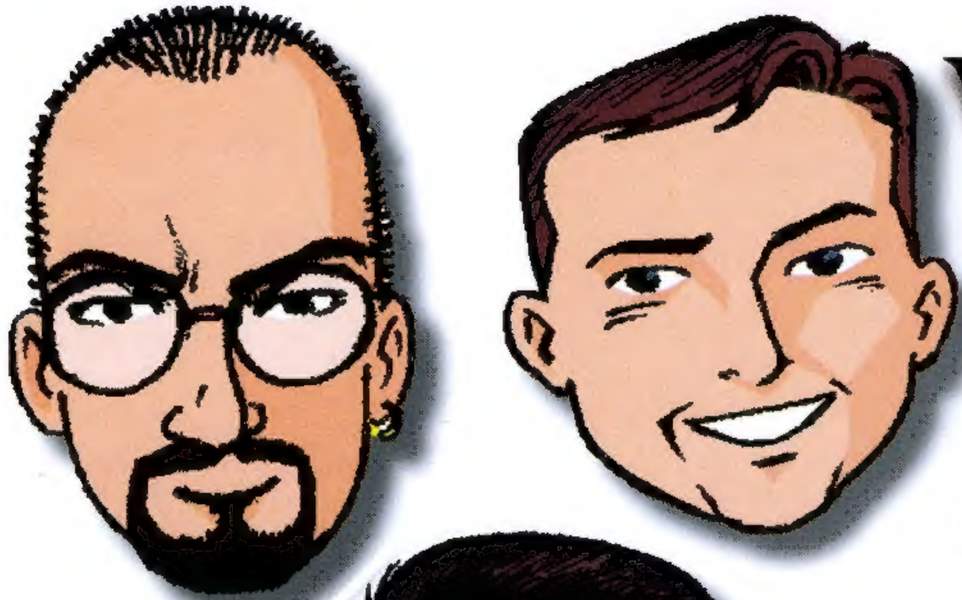

VISION 30

Timothy Tuohy
Most appreciative Editor
Julio Soto
Got to edit his own issue
Carlin Trammel
Joined us at the end

Bryan Cairns
Dean Davis, Barry Dutter
Lysa M. Hawkins, Matt Idelson
Jim Krueger, Andy Mangels
Rob Piotrowski, Benny Powell
Peter Sanderson & Polly Watson
Writers who validated the art of writing
Chris Carroll, James DeSimone
Brent Ferguson, Jeanne Geier
Rob LaQuinta, Mel Sanchez
& Jeff Suter
Designers with concepts yet to realize
Vito Incorvaia
Been here since issue #1
Bill Rosemann
Solicit Writer and Editor and future auteur
Regina Massaro
Became the best licensing rep we have
Susan Raso
Kept the book on schedule
Caroline Lemay
Printed the book and got it to the stores
John Stack
Drove me around Canada with a smile
Bob Harras
A very patient Editor in Chief
Jim (Ski) Sokolowski
VISION's #1 supporter
Shirrel Rhoades
Is still from another planet
Matt Friedman, Michel Lé
Shawn Walker, Spencer Lamm
Deb Brust, Bob Sodaro, Colleen Murphy
Fabian Nicieza, Kevin Tang, Suzanne Paquin
Viktor Koen, Mark Bernardo
Marc Robinson, Hank Bordowitz
Mike Marts, Steve Vrattos, Tom Rolston
Draw The Line Inc., -DJ and Paul
Flo Steinberg, Jack Abel
& most imortantly Jim Brennan for giving me this assignment.
Names from the past

Happy Trails!

It ended much too soon. That's how I felt when word came down that VISION was being canceled. We set out almost three years ago to give the Marvel Fans what they so desperately asked for: a fan magazine devoted solely to Marvel. At first it seemed to be a daunting task.

Question: How do you work for a company, produce a fan magazine to promote the company and not sound like page after page of cheap and mindless hype?

Answer: Trial and error coupled with a belief that what you were doing was the best that you could do.

We had some goof-ups to be sure. The almost unreadable Dan Jurgens interview in our debut issue. The wonderful spelling error on the cover of the fourth issue? The cover no less. And most recently leaving off the answer to the Ka-Zar Word Search.

We've dealt with creators, different companies (I got my head handed to me on a platter by Mike Carlin once), staffers, conventions and, of course, the most important group of them all, the fans.

VISION has been praised as having one of the best letters pages at Marvel. A letters page that got me a "talkin' to" on more than one occasion. Having some fun features like Time Slip and Beast Files as well as the all-too-short Artist vs. Artist.

We were there right at the beginning of Heroes Reborn and saw the Heroes Return. We witnessed the devastating power of Onslaught and the wonder of Franklin Richards.

It's been an incredible 30 issues for a magazine that was originally condemned by issue #3, no lie!

If VISION has served any purpose, I hope it was to inform and entertain all of Marvel's fans. Keep reading comics. Share them with your friends.

Thank you.

We're done.

Tim Tuohy Julio Soto

Tim Tuohy and Julio Soto

MARVEL VISION insights

Welcome to what are unfortunately the last Marvel VISION letters pages. Over the past 29 issues, this magazine has enjoyed the most diverse and pardon the pun "insightful" letters written by a very wide variety of people. We've received letters from children, teens and adults. The subjects have been funny, relevant and at time quite volatile. It has been my pleasure to take the time out every month to read and respond to all of the correspondence VISION has received. Whether it came by the old-fashioned way or by e-mail, I read each and every letter.

Now without further ado—

Dear INSIGHTS,

As I sat at my desk a couple of hours ago writing checks to various credit card companies to pay for my holiday excesses, I found my thoughts turning toward death. No, not my death or even the deaths of my creditors, but to death in the Marvel Universe and the heated debate it produces in fandom.

More and more in letters from fans and in editorials by magazines such as WIZARD, you hear it said that the many resurrections that have taken place in the past few years have made character deaths meaningless. I am writing this letter to disagree.

Fans, it seems to me, tend to judge death in the Marvel Universe by the criteria of our universe. This is a mistake. In our universe, or at least on our planet, death remains the ultimate mystery. Some believe that we have immortal souls, which at the moment of death pass on to other realms, or at least to other bodies. Others believe that with our death, we end, blown out like a candle. No one knows for sure.

In the Marvel Universe however, these questions have been answered. Sentient beings do have souls and there is an afterlife, many in fact. Valhalla of Norse legend, Avalon of the Celtics, and Hades of the Greek mythology all exist, to name a few. And while no definitive Christian heaven or hell has yet appeared, many hellish dimensions, populated with self-professed demons and tormented souls have been presented to us over the years.

Death has been proven to be a door in the Marvel realm. A door that can be made to swing both ways if you have the power to force it to do so. As it was in the Greek and Roman myths, so it is in the Marvel myths. The souls of the mighty, be they heroic or evil, can return from beyond the grave.

This does not, as some have said, make deaths of Marvel characters meaningless. If you don't believe me then you aren't keeping up with many of the current titles. Shame on you!! Elektra still suffers greatly from the ramifications of her resurrection. In the pages of SILVER SURFER, once mighty Mephisto finds himself a disembodied soul trapped in limbo. And in X-FORCE, Mephisto's son, Blackheart, makes Cable's clone and enemy, Stryfe, suffer a most unpleasant afterlife.

But what about the other types of character death you may ask? The type where a major hero or villain seems to die only to reappear months or even years later with some explanation of how they survived. The fate of the acceptance of these pseudo resurrections lies solely on the shoulders of the writer. My personal advice to any writer planning to bring back a character in this manner is to think long and hard about doing it, and even longer and harder about how it's to be done. A well written character return can revitalize a book and a poorly written one can destroy it.

Greg McDonald
616 Oakdale Dr.
Gadsden, AL 35903

Thanks for the letter, Greg. Death in the Marvel Universe has always been a particularly touchy subject around the Hallowed Halls of Marvel. I was just a regular Marvel Zombie when the ground-breaking DEATH OF CAPTAIN MARVEL was published and it shocked me as well as endeared the way of the Marvel Universe to me. Here was a guy who could do so much more than I ever could yet, in the end, despite all of his powers he was just like you and me: a human being but, gifted with extraordinary abilities.

Since then, there have been quite a few deaths and resurrections (We have even been featuring that subject in this and the previous issue of VISION.) in the MU and you are quite correct in placing responsibility on the value of any death or resurrection on the shoulders of the creative team, editor included.

A death and resurrection should be done, and I know this sounds silly, to provide the best benefit to the character not some as half-baked sales gimmick. In the end, the story must take precedent.

Well, befitting the last issue of VISION here then is a first. In VISION #24 we printed a letter regarding religion in the MU. That letter and my response generated a lot of mail. What follows is a debate between two readers who wanted to voice their own opinions on the subject. They wrote each other and sent me copies of their letters for VISION to print.

Dear INSIGHTS,

I know you folks have probably gotten more responses to the religious issue brought up in INSIGHTS #24 than you really wanted, but I just have to add my own.

I'd like to know if Mr. Shea actually believes what he's shoveling, or if he knows he needs to be wearing hip-waders? I know I felt the need for a roll of toilet paper after reading his equally venomous response to Dennis Copper's letter.

First off, Mr. Shea, I'd like to know where you supposed Christians get off trying to make words into things of evil. The word "pagan" simply means anyone that is not Jewish, Muslim, or Christian. The word "secular" means anything worldly, non-religious, or mundane. Therefore, it could be construed that Mr. Shea's tirade was intended to

insult Hindus, Buddhists, scientists, and teachers. Was that your intention, Mr. Shea, or did you just spout off without bothering to know anything about the subject?

Secondly, even if those words meant exactly what you and your kind would like to fool the rest of us into believing, what right do you have to tell us that those things are wrong? That decision is for each individual to make. People like you seem to think that it's your constitutional right to shove your religious beliefs down everyone else's throats. But those of us with different views and religions should keep them to ourselves. It's a double standard that we've had to endure in this country for more than 200 years.

Personally, I have no problem with Marvel making some of its characters Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or whatever. It helps to define them as people, because all people have spiritual beliefs of some kind. That was one of the reasons why I liked Firebird in the old AVENGERS WEST COAST title. Her religion always seemed to help her see something better than what was at hand. She used her religion to help fuel her already incredible abilities to achieve a positive change.

With regard to the GAMBIT mini-series, I was much more disappointed with the story and artwork than with any theological concerns. I'm funny that way. I'm a comic book fan first, and a trouble maker second. I also have n o problem with a fan writing in to express his (dis)satisfaction with religion being portrayed in a comic. However, I become downright nasty when somebody decides his religious views must be or overriding concern to all.

Mr. Shea, I'm real glad you've found "the way." Now sit down and let the rest of us find our own path. Mr. Copper was just expressing his opinion. It's one of his rights. You know what rights are, don't you? That's the principles people like you trample on in your fervor to make everyone see things your way.

I'm sorry if you and your people feel that your religion is under attack. Frankly, I think it's just a group of anarchists failing to accept the fact that everyone has a right to his own spirituality. But even if it were true, maybe the anti-Christian sentiment is simple a reaction to the fact that Christianity has held the world in a tyrannical grip for almost 2000 years, and we're tired of it.

Religion can be a wonderful and fulfilling personal experience, but history has shown that it can also be used to cruelly subjugate an entire planet. Sorry for the rant, folks, but this is an issue that I am simply sick of having crammed down my throat. Comics used to be one of my sanctuaries away from this issue. Now it seems that some people have decided to take their battle to my temple and I'm ticked

Cody Bear Blue Eagle
P. O. Box 907
Fairview, OR 97024-0907

Dear INSIGHTS,

This letter is addressed to Mr./Mrs. Blue Eagle:

Thanks for sharing your letter to Marvel INSIGHTS with me. I would like to take this opportunity to discuss with you the obviously different perspectives that we bring to the issue of religious/non-religious portrayals in comic books and in society at large.

Let me address your letter paragraph by paragraph:

¶2-Yes, I actually believe what I am, as you term it, "shoveling." In any religion, the ideal is not to blindly follow a belief, but to hold firm to the belief because it represents personal agreement reached after careful thought and submission to God. As such, I am an adherent to the tenets of Roman Catholicism.

¶3- As a Christian, I am not trying to make words evil. I am putting them into the context of usage in 1998 America as to belief or disbelief. No, my tirade--defined as a long violent speech, especially when censorious--should not be construed as insulting to Hindus or Buddhists. Or for that matter, to scientists or teachers, who may or may not share a religious or non-religious value system. No, I am not just spouting off about a subject I didn't bother to know anything about. Quite the contrary, I know and have experienced racial and religious bigotry for some time now.

¶4-I've never attempted to shove my religious beliefs down anyone's throat. Nor did I advocate that others with different beliefs keep it to themselves. I simply stated my personal beliefs and opinions in a letter to a magazine. If you interpret written discourse to mean forced coercion, how will those of us who have differences be able to express them calmly and intelligently? As to the double standard that you and others have endured for 2000 years, I would pose that religious conservatives like myself have been held suspect by religio-phobes in academia, business, government, sports, etc. for some time now.

¶5-Nor do I have a problem with Marvel depicting its characters as a member of any religion or non-religious group. I was simply taking issue with Mr. Cooper's attack on, and obvious disdain for Christianity and Catholicism. Similar to your statement that Firebird used her religion to help fuel her already incredible abilities to achieve a positive change, my letter states: "I find solace in the fact that characters like Gambit, Daredevil, and Nightcrawler struggle with their religion as they are confronted by voluminous amounts of adversity and pain." To me, we don't disagree on this.

¶6-I've been called worse than a pompous nitwit, but again, I did not decide my religious views "must be overriding concerns to all." I never said that characters must be this or must be that to fit my view of the world. That would be fascist. In fact, I would welcome more diverse characters in the comic universe to keep things interesting. Again, I was replying to Mr. Cooper's rhetoric concerning his view that there exists an abundance of religious overtones and characters in comics today. However, if the artists and writers want to express themselves through religion or the lack thereof, that is their prerogative. Those who disagree with their expression can simply choose to not purchase the books.

7-I'm glad that you're glad that I found "the way." Yes, you can find your own path, and yes Mr. Cooper was just expressing his opinion, but so was I. I believe this is a right that we all have in

common. But I will not sit down and shut up when it comes to someone disparaging my beliefs. Who is doing the trampling now?

¶8-If your are truly sorry that I and my people feel that our religion is under attack, then be tolerant of our point of view, which is as equally valid as yours. In addition, with Christianity being the world's largest religion and doing much good through the centuries, I don't agree with your assertion that the world is in its tyrannical grip.

9-Yes, religion can be a wonderful and fulfilling personal experience. And yes, it can be used to cruelly subjugate, but subjugating an entire planet is reaching just a bit, don't you think? Sorry for ticking you off, Cody Bear and bringing the battle to your temple, but Mr. Cooper incensed me in the same manner. So I exercised my right to reply and to defend my beliefs from the head as well as from the heart.

10-I don't think that Marvel INSIGHTS should have steered clear of this volatile issue and appreciate the fact that they didn't.

Christopher M. Shea
4336 Worth Dr. E.
Jacksonville, FL 32207-7502

Since this is the last issue of VISION, this will be the last on that subject. Why did I include this? Everyone is entitled to his opinion and his beliefs. I would much rather live in a world where we all had something to believe in and agreed to disagree, rather than a society that just existed and that's it.

Dear INSIGHTS,

Should Marvel have it's own form of adult comics just as DC has the Vertigo series? Well, to quote a certain Asgardian Avenger, "I say thee nay." If you take a look at the kinds of stories Warren Ellis does with TRANSMETROPOLITAN. Or what Garth Ennis does on PREACHER. You'll see that these comics are full of the most foul language and graphic content ever put into a comic. Such R-rated material has no place in comic books and it is because of books like these which scare parents so much. Everyone is so worried about what their kids read in the comics these days and publishers should start thinking more about what young children want to read in their comics.

So I urge Marvel not to have any kind of Adult Only comics. You should keep publishing comics that are suitable for all ages. It's a great way for parents and children to become stronger as families by reading stories where heroes try and make a difference in the world. That is what Marvel does best and you should stay with it.

Robert Moraes
10214 E. Stoney Vista Dr.
Sun Lakes, AZ 85248

Quite an interesting argument, Roger. I think that there does exist the opportunity to publish stories for all to enjoy and to do more adult oriented works. The final question must be asked: "If a child gets material that he shouldn't whose responsibility is it?" The shop owners who seem to get arrested at the drop of a hat for even having adult comics in their shops. The parent who hands his kid a $20 and says, "Have a field day"? The publisher who wants to please a wide variety of tastes?

It's all our responsibility. There are many instances in film for example where a movie studio has diversified to gain a wider audience. Most notable is Disney. Hollywood Pictures is a division of the world-famous studio and its movies tend to steer toward the PG/PG-13 level. Miramax another subsidiary of Disney seems to stay in the strictly R rated range.

Brushing the blame off on others has got to stop. Let's all sit around with the kids and read comics that are for the kids. I, for one, want my PREACHER.

THANKS FOR WRITING!

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TURN THE PAGE FOR A SPECIAL SURPRISE.

<u>Who's Who in Marvel Editorial</u>

1. Odin-Ski
2. Mister Fantastic-Bob Harras
3. Angel-Jaye Gardner
4. Iron Fist-Ruben Diaz
5. Spidey-Joe Andreani
6. Daredevil-Ralph Macchio
7. Captain Marvel-Jason Liebig
8. Thor-Mark Bernardo
9. Doctor Doom-Wilson Ramos
10. Hulk-Glenn Greenberg
11. The Mandril-Matt Idelson
12. Yellowjacket-Matt Hicks
13. She-Hulk-Bobbie Chase
14. 3D Man-Tom Brevoort
15. Nightcrawler-Frank Pittarese
16. Cloak-Paul Tutrone
17. Black Knight-Pete Franco
18. Punisher-Tim Tuohy
19. Mary Jane-Marie Javins
20. Gwen Stacy-Polly Watson
21. Captain America-Mark Powers
22. Hawkeye-Julio Soto
23. Beast-Gregg Schigiel
24. Wolverine-Dan Hosek
25. Puck-Jason White

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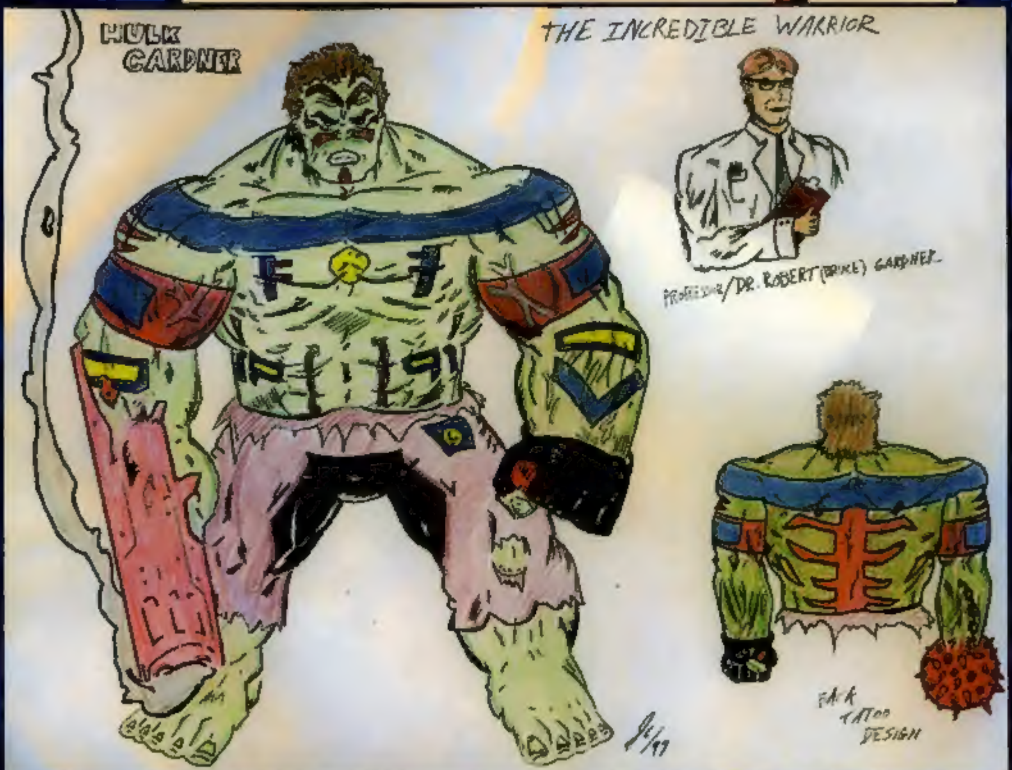
ADAM THUR & GARY BURTON **GAMBAT**

ZAC WHITE **MATRIX**

DAVID PERKINS **DEVIL BAT**



JON ELLIS **HULK GARDNER**

NATHAN LEIGH **SUPER SAVAGE**

BART HAGAN **HOBO**

MARC BARTSCH **FIRE HAWK**

MARK A. JONES **UNCLE BEN**

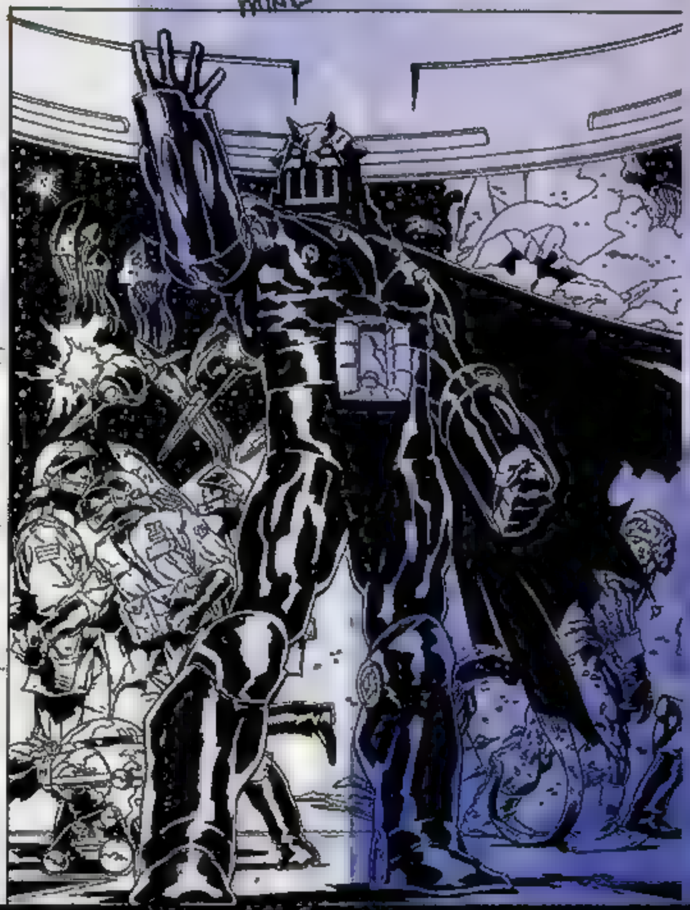
KEVIN MAYLE **AMALGAMATIONS**

TO THE MICROVERSE AND BEYOND

We have some good news and some bad news.

Good news first. In a subatomic universe far, far away, yet nearer than the mind can comprehend, the ruthless Baron Karza ruled the Microverse. Ever since he turned traitor and murdered Homeworld's king and queen, Dallan and Sepsis Rann, his power has been feared throughout the planets. Enter the Micronauts, a group of freedom fighters who banded together to oppose this tyranny. During their last encounter, the Micronauts finally defeated and killed their arch-nemesis. With Karza pushing up daisies, our heroes have been able to sit back and take it a little easier.

Now the bad news. Their all too brief moment of R & R is over. Coming soon, Shon (BLACK OPS) C. Bury and Cary (DAREDEVIL, STAR TREK/ X-MEN: SECOND CONTACT) Nord will be introducing a menace in the new MICRONAUTS series unlike any they've ever faced before. Desperate times call for desperate measures and the Micronauts are forced to ally themselves with someone they may live to regret. Hmmm....Actually, all this pulse-pounding action sounds like good news, at least for the readers. Buckle up, it's going to be a bumpy ride.



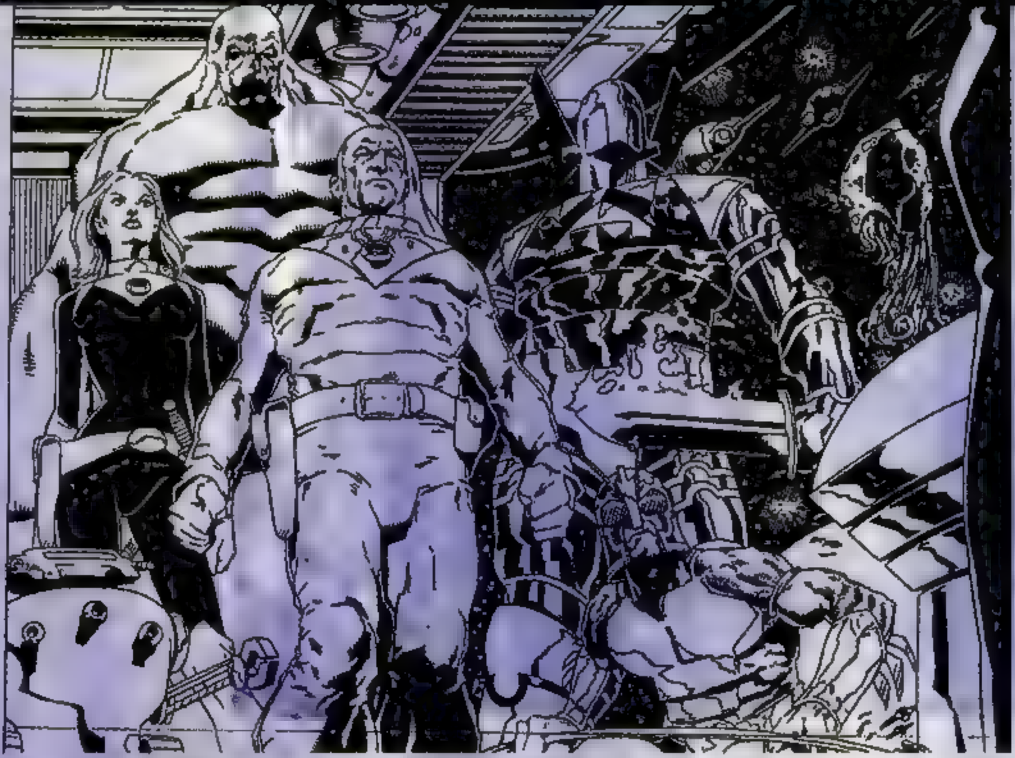
"There is a big war going on, the fate of the Microverse hangs in the balance and Homeworld is under attack," reveals writer Bury. "Baron Karza will also be back. Basically what's going on is there's a threat so ominous that the threat of Karza pales in comparison. He's actually needed to save the Micronauts so the Micronauts have to recharge the body banks and bring him back."

The body banks are a huge facility full of replacement organs such as arms, legs, lungs and hearts. Part of Karza's claim to power came when he promised Homeworld's affluent class eternal youth. By using the banks, he transplanted their minds into younger, healthier and more beautiful bodies.

Yet what could be so devastating to warrant giving Karza a second chance? After all, the

Micronauts have faced Karza, Psycho Man and the traitorous Force Commander. They have teamed up with the X-Men, Fantastic Four and Cable. They've explored unknown regions of their universe.

Surely they can handle anything thrown their way, even ...gulp....a full scale alien invasion? The book won't be pulling any punches either because from page one, it's all-out war!



"There is going to be a huge space battle," describes artist Nord. "It is an amalgamation of "Star Wars," "Aliens," "Star Trek" and "ID4." There's going to be hundreds of soldiers fighting these invaders. It should be a lot of fun."

The first story arc will run for three issues, concluding in a double-sized extravaganza. Following the outcome, the Micronauts will deal with military oppression. Although Bury remained secretive about details, he did tease that the team will begin to learn resurrecting Karza was a big mistake as he returns to true form.

While Bury hopes to be able to capture the same magic that enthralled him as a fan and live up to its predecessors, he does note the previous two books somewhat lacked direction. In the original series, the only foe they ever seemed to battle was Karza. In New Voyages, the group was lost in space but seemed at ease with that. They never really cared if they ever returned home. Now Bury is hoping to give them more purpose and a new rogues gallery.

The next arc focuses on the Enigma Force, an energy that binds the Microverse. In the past, the force has had a mystical component to it which will be redefined in the series.

"I look at it like the Collective Unconscious," says Bury. "I think of it as pure psionic energy which everyone can plug into but so far very few have."

The storyline will feature a villain who is deeply involved with the Enigma Force as a religious militant. Besides that, future issues will have a surprise villain pop up whom fans will recognize as a former hero, and Raan will have a power struggle between the forces of good and evil.

If this isn't enough to satisfy your Micronauts meltdown cravings, the tiny team will also be guest-starring in ALPHA FLIGHT #10, #11 and possibly this year's annual. It seems the mysterious Clark and Department H have been manipulating events and convince Alpha Flight they must go into hiding. The solution presented to them: enter the Prometheus Pit. This transports them to the Microverse, specifically an unvisited area based on Egyptian life. Co-writer Steven T. Seagle

says that what initially seems to be an ideal society is anything but. In fact, a class struggle is going on where one race tries to supplant the other, thinking it's for their own good.

"It's all the Micronauts you know and love," tells co-writer Joe Casey about the story. "When Alpha Flight arrives on Homeworld, they meet another Baron named Baron Zebek and he's the villain of the story. He's got his own body banks and Alpha Flight is just in time to help the Micronauts in their resistance fight. The Baron also has a weapon that not only endangers the Microverse, but the regular universe as well."

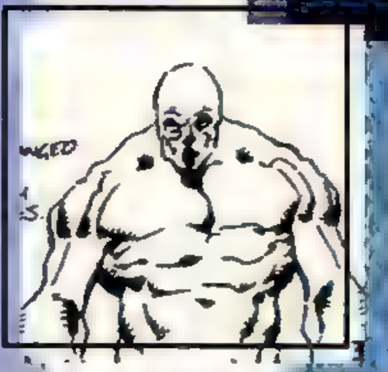
While Seagle jokes about the usual happy ending, he does say he is a big Micronauts fan and even as we spoke, was staring at those toys he has collected. So what's fascinating about this team? Why not have someone else drop by? Seagle knows the answer.

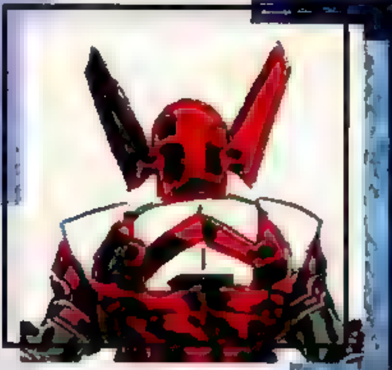
"I think anytime you have a team book, what matters is the dynamics. And the dynamics is all about the mix of characters and the mix in Micronauts is just right."

For Nord, the book's unique flavor stems from the fact this isn't your average, run-of-the-mill super hero adventure. Instead, it has that element and a whole lot more.

"It's got a real Star Wars feel to it. And people aren't in spandex and they don't have fantastic powers. They have body armor but they're more believable as people. That's what I like about it. And it is written more realistically with normal guys with normal problems. There is no easy way out of things; they have to fight for it."

Longtime readers will be happy to know one of Bury's intentions is to re-establish the original core of main characters. For newbies unfamiliar with those ranks, thanks to Shon, here's a who's who of the Micronauts.





COMMANDER RAAN: "Next to Baron Karza, he is the greatest tactician. He's a natural leader who comes from the royal family on Homeworld. A grim and solemn character, he's kind of weathered and experienced. Raan has no superpowers besides the fact he can channel the Enigma Force."

BUG: "He's Nightcrawler. He's the fun character. He's the guy who sticks on walls. He's actually going to change the least all the way around. He's the one who cuts right to the chase a bit more and says 'so what you're trying to tell me is Baron Karza is about ready to blow up the world.'"

MARI: "I dropped the Marionette because it's kind of derogatory. No one pulls her strings. She should be the queen of Homeworld if it ever gets back together. She needs to act more aristocratic. We last saw her becoming more assertive and confidant so that's going to carry over. She's a Nicole Kidman with a bit of Princess Di."

HUNTARR: "He's a living weapon, kind of like DC's Clayface. Huntarr is one big bio-weapon who can transform into any weapon he wants. A deadly solemn character, the only thing that drives Huntarr is he cares about the Micronauts. He doesn't like himself very much and there's not too many characters who hate themselves. I want to delve into his psyche and find out why."

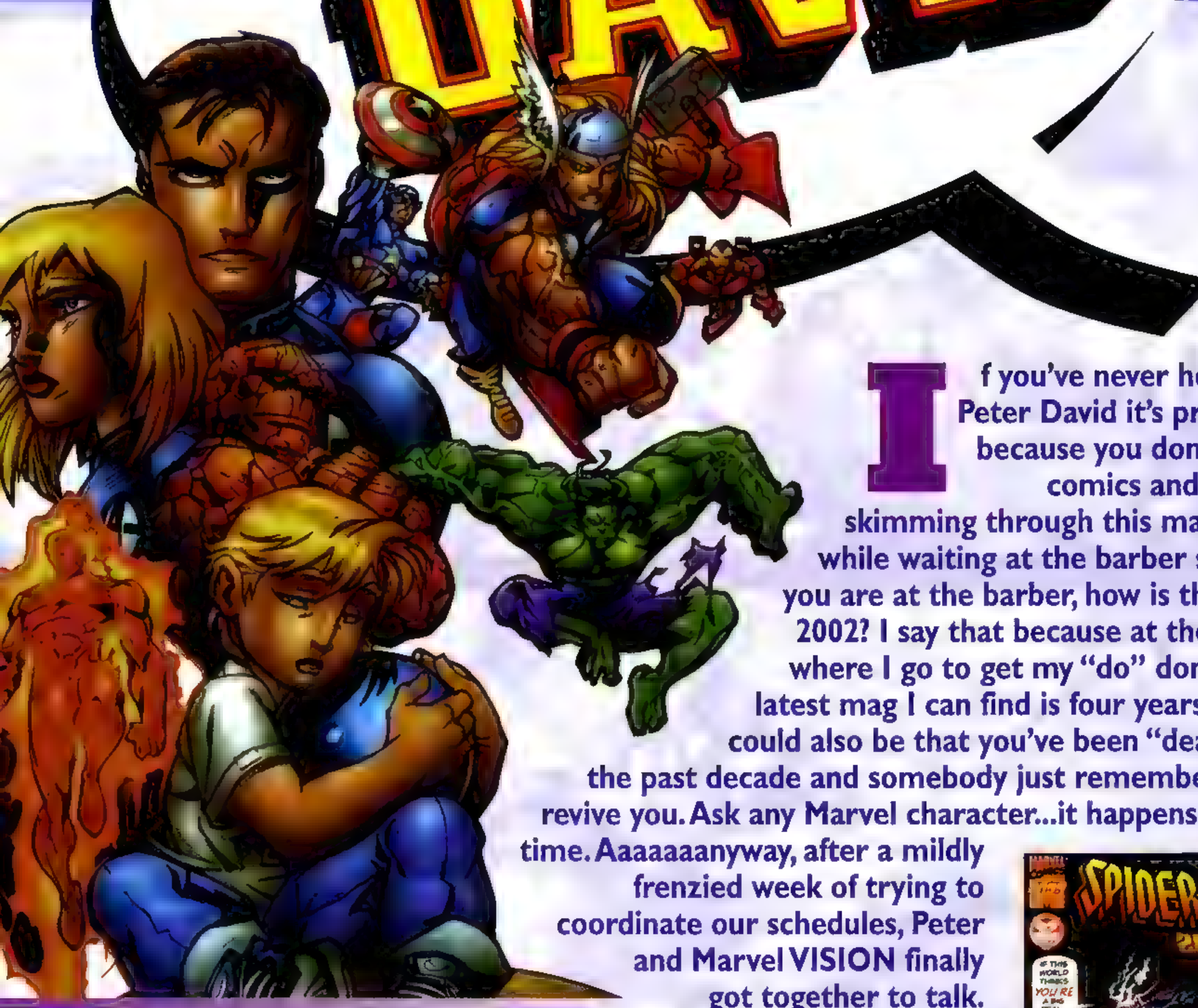
ACROYEAR: "He's named after his own race. He's the crowned king of his people. They are the ultimate tough-as-nails warriors and were Klingons before it was cool to be Klingons. What I have planned for Acroyear is he is finally going to take responsibility for his people. He's not going to let the fact they think he betrayed them stand in the way of his sworn duties."

BARON KARZA: "He is the evil archetype, he's the traitor turned dictator. He was once the chief scientist of the Royal Family who also trained Commander Raan. Now he's back and badder than ever. He's just as much the Microverse as the Micronauts."

Betrayals. Excitement. Adventure. A dash of romance. The dark versus the light. Sounds like old times with some new twists. Get ready to jump on the revved-up Micronauts bandwagon as they once again prove good things do indeed come in small packages.

—Bryan Cairns

30 MINUTES WITH... PETER DAVID



If you've never heard of Peter David it's probably because you don't read comics and you're skimming through this magazine while waiting at the barber shop. If you are at the barber, how is the year 2002? I say that because at the place where I go to get my "do" done, the latest mag I can find is four years old. It could also be that you've been "dead" for the past decade and somebody just remembered to revive you. Ask any Marvel character...it happens all the time. Aaaaaaanyway, after a mildly frenzied week of trying to coordinate our schedules, Peter and Marvel VISION finally got together to talk.

by Dean Davis

DD: So, Peter...tell us how your first job at Marvel had nothing to do with your present job at Marvel.

PAD: I started in the Direct Sales Department. We were in charge of getting the comic books into the direct sales stores. At that point in time our department consisted of exactly two people...myself and my boss, Carol Kalish. Eventually she was promoted to director of Specialty Sales and I was made Direct Sales Manager. I did that for five years and it was essentially my day job.

The comic book writing didn't really crop up until the third or fourth year of my tenure at Marvel. I approached Jim Owsley (a.k.a. Christopher Priest) about the notion of pitching a Spider-Man story or two. He liked my work and he wound up putting me on SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN. This put a lot of editorial noses out of joint at the time. Many of them felt it was a conflict of interest. Since I worked with the comic distributors, they felt that I would promote my books over everyone else's. As a result I almost had to bend over backwards not to do any promotion for SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN.

"I took on the Hulk and it made me realize that I could make a go of it as a full-time writer."

After my time on Spider-Man ended, Bob Harras offered me the HULK. He was one of the few editors that didn't feel it was a problem with my other job. Also, the pressure lightened up a bit because I had been with SPECTACULAR for about a year and the roof had not come crumbling down or lightning didn't strike Marvel because I wrote [comics] and worked in Direct Sales. To be honest, I don't think anyone wanted to write the HULK at the time anyway. (both laugh)

I took on the HULK and it made me realize that I could make a go of it as a full-time writer. I put out "probes" to DC. I didn't take on any work at DC while working the day job at Marvel because that would have been a conflict of interest. In approaching some of my friends at DC I asked that if I became a freelancer would they be interested in any of my work. They informed me that there was a PHANTOM mini-series that would be right up my alley. Based upon the prospect of assignments that was described to me I left my sales job at Marvel and became a writer.

DD: Did you leave as soon as you got the gig on the INCREDIBLE HULK?

PAD: No, I was on the HULK for about a year and a half before I left for a freelance career. As a matter of fact, I could tell you the exact day I became a full-time writer. It was the day that Dwight Gooden rejoined the Mets after drug rehab and it was the same day that Spider-Man and Mary Jane got married in Shea Stadium. I'm not sure what the date was but I know you could look it up somewhere.

DD: (laughter) I really don't feel like looking that up, but I'm sure someone will and write to Tim. Did you always have a penchant for writing?

PAD: My formal training was in writing. I have a bachelor's degree in Journalism from New York University. I eventually decided that being a reporter was not the type of work that I wanted to pursue. I did want to stay in the publishing field, though. My initial thought was trying to get in the editorial side, but I found that I had a flair for sales. It was fun for me and I worked in the sales departments of various book publishers before landing at Marvel Comics.

Even when I was working in the Direct Sales Department I was writing novels. A book of mine was published by Ace Books, a division of Berkley Books, called "Knight Life." It was a fantasy story about King Arthur. The cover proof for this book was pinned up in my office. I'll never forget when Al Milgrom walked in, glanced at it and said, "How about that...another writer named Peter David." (both laugh) I immediately got a hold of Berkley and made the request for an author's bio in the back.

DD: Since you write a good deal of science fiction, you must have an interest in it. What influences helped shape that interest?

PAD: Oh yeah, I've always had an interest in science fiction. I read many books by writers like Ben Bova, Isaac Asimov, and Harlan Ellison...who would kill me if he heard I referred to him as a science fiction writer. He's really more a writer of "speculative fantasy." I also was a *Star Trek* fan and I saw many science fiction films.

DD: You have done other subjects and genres as well.

PAD: Sure...When I was a reporter I covered the news and wrote journalistic stories. I just found that I like the genre of fantasy and science fiction, and comics pretty much fall into that category. I don't exclusively write sci-fi. My column in the COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE ("But I Digress") is basically essays. Many of them are comics related but I explore other subjects as well.

One of the things I've tried to do as well as write for other genres is to branch out in other forms of writing. I've done comic books, novels, movies, television, and newspaper articles. Okay, so most of it can be pegged as science fiction, but at least it's in a variety of venues.

DD: You're probably the only guy I know of besides Walter Koenig who's working with *Babylon 5* and *Star Trek*. That's pretty cool!

PAD: I'm doing two novelizations of the *Babylon 5* original movies that will be on TNT. The first one is called "In the Beginning" which is sort of a prequel to *Babylon 5* and the second is titled "Third Space." I met Joe Straczynski at the San Diego Comic Con and he asked me to do these books.

Moving on to *Star Trek* I'm having a really great time on my current series of novels called "New Frontier." These are about a ship and crew which are completely original. This is the first time Paramount has ever authorized books that are based upon a non-television series; it's tremendously exciting for us because we have a huge degree of latitude. When you do a *DS9* or *Next Generation* book the status quo at the end has to be as it was in the beginning. I can do whatever I want in the New Frontier.

DD: A majority of comic fans first heard of you as the writer for the Hulk. What can we see coming down the pike for the Gamma-Guy?

PAD: I'm very determined to shake things up in a way that hasn't been done before. Essentially what I'm planning to do over the next six months or so is lead the readers to believe that the series is going in a particular direction. I'll then completely sandbag them and take the story on a totally different path than they expected.

DD: Staying with the automobile metaphors...The Hulk had a bumpy road with some hairpin turns prior to Heroes Reborn. Can you explain a bit about that?

PAD: Well, the HULK was [theoretically] cancelled for awhile. When the whole Unfinished Business thing was put forward, Marvel was going to cancel not only THOR but the HULK as well. He was then going to be relegated to a supporting character in IRON MAN. This caused an outcry among the fans and some people within Marvel as well. The powers that be eventually got together and said, "Why are we cancelling the HULK?" The fans to a very large degree saved the book.

DD: Was that through a letter writing campaign?

PAD: Letter writing, e-mail, any number of things. People just voiced their opinions that they thought it was a bad idea. There was the belief, I suppose you would call it, that the cancellation of the HULK and demoting him to "second class status" in IRON MAN was some sort of retribution ploy on the part of Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld. I don't think it was an accurate belief, but go argue with the fans. I myself never believed it for a second. Nobody goes through that much work to get somebody fired off a book. Besides which, I've never had a problem with Jim and even the disagreements I've had with Rob made me believe they would never go to that degree. I never took it personally...never. The fans on the other hand did take it personally, very personally. The ultimate decision was that there would be a Hulk in both universes. The main problem with this is that it sent my continuity and main storyline careening off in an unexpected direction. It was a massive monkey wrench that took me three issues to get back on track the way I wanted it to be. It was probably the single most difficult time I've had writing the series. I'll tell you, I've resigned off books for lesser reasons, but the fans were so supportive I felt an obligation to stay with the series.

DD: Many of the artists you've worked with on the Hulk have definitely been a plus for Bruce and the crew, don't you agree?

PAD: Nah, it was all just a parade of losers and never wases. Not a memorable one in the bunch. They all faded into obscurity.

DD: Whoa! Holy scandalous scoop, Batman!

PAD: I must follow up that statement with "I'm kidding!" I've been very blessed. I've worked with tremendously talented people.

DD: Which one was the most memorable?

PAD: Ooooh, tough question. If you're asking me to pick a favorite I'd probably say George Perez. It's not like we've done a lot together, but the stuff we did on FUTURE IMPERFECT remains one of my favorite Hulk stories.

DD: One of the best things I've ever seen in comics was the double page spread of the trophy room in FUTURE IMPERFECT. Did you have any input with the items in this scene?

PAD: I've always been very up front about this...George deserves all the credit for that one. What I said in the script was, "Double page spread, interior of Rick Jones' trophy room. It is crammed with memorabilia from all through the Marvel Universe including (for story purposes): Wolverine's skeleton, Surfer's board, Cap's shield, and Thor's hammer." Aside from a couple of things we came up with together, 99% of it was from George.

DD: I always thought that would make a great poster or lithograph.

PAD: Yeah, I agree. That would be a good piece of art to hang on the wall.

DD: Is there an artist who you'd like to have an opportunity to work with?

PAD: Steve Ditko. His work on HULK #6 remains one of my favorite interpretations of the character.

DD: Marvel has also done some novels centered around their biggest characters. What has your experience been with these?

PAD: I've previously done a Hulk novel called "What Savage Beast" and I'm an editor and contributor on an upcoming anthology book of short stories entitled THE ULTIMATE HULK.

DD: Peter, it's been a gamma-radiated blast! Thanks for your time.

PAD: Sure, and thank you.

Interviewer Dean Davis once put on a really small t-shirt so he could flex his back and rip it off like the Hulk.

(ON THE INCREDIBLE HULK) "I'm very determined to shake things up in a way that hasn't been done before."

Weather
This afternoon unseasonably warm, highs near 65. Tonight mostly cloudy, with a chance of rain, lows in the mid 50's.

DAILY BUGLE®

IN THIS ISSUE
Captain America speaks out on life as an Avenger. Special interview by the Bugle's own Susan Ratso.
Page B1

April 10, 1998 | New York's Finest Daily Newspaper | Fifty Cents

AVENGERS BATTLE AT SITE OF ALIEN CRASH

Craig Seagull -BUGLE

Members of the famed super hero team The Avengers found themselves the target of both a super hero attack and massive public scrutiny after they were called upon to investigate the crash of an alien spacecraft at sea. Details about the vehicle itself were sketchy and kept confidential by government officials, but the fallout of the Avengers' battle was plain for all to see.

The Avengers, including Captain America, Thor and Iron Man, were called out to the crash site in the Outer Hebrides by their government liaison, Duane Freeman. Amidst large numbers of print and television reporters and cameramen, the Avengers had begun their investigation when a fairly unknown super team named the Squadron Supreme arrived, making a controversial claim.

The Squadron ordered the civilians and military personnel in the area to stay away from the Avengers, who they accused of being impostors. Said one member of the Squadron, "We have reason to believe that the Avengers died at the hands of Onslaught, and that these individuals, like the Thunderbolts before them, are impostors, part of an agenda to earn the public's trust and then turn on you all!"

Both the gathered reporters and the Avengers stood in stunned silence for a moment before the accused heroes went on the offensive. All, save Captain America who attempted to argue the illegitimacy of the Squadron's claim with both the Squadron and the nearby reporters.

The battle lasted nearly twenty minutes before the Squadron, losing the conflict, withdrew, promising that they would expose the faux Avengers for who they really are. In light of the recent Skrull fiasco, in which a member of that alien species impersonated Captain America and created a national panic by claiming that one out of every twenty Americans had been replaced by a Skrull, reporters were reticent to believe the Avengers. One columnist for a competing paper challenged the team to prove they are who they say they are. Unable to do so, the Avengers returned to New York, leaving in their wake unanswered questions and many concerns.

Calls to Avengers Mansion went unreturned, and Duane Freeman had no comment on the matter.

—Continued in AVENGERS #5

Staff Photo Chuck Giambalvo

BIZARRE DOINGS IN ISRAEL

Ben Urich -BUGLE

The swirling sands and the incredible heat of the Armageddon Desert which lies outside the famed walls of Jerusalem are rich in history and tradition. An historic new chapter was added to its saga yesterday when Britain's premier super team, Excalibur, battled a strangely enigmatic foe.

Excalibur, one of the few mutant teams accepted by society (unlike their American counterparts, the X-Men), was joined in their bizarre battle by Israel's lone super hero, Sabra. Her association with Excalibur was not a surprise given that she was last sighted in Asia with the X-Men several months ago.

Witnesses say that two to three ghost-like apparitions materialized in the middle of the historic city of Jerusalem. Accounts of the intruders varied wildly; one man described them as "immaterial and see-through" while a group of women said the ghosts were "as real as you and I, except that they appeared from thin air." One elderly man said that one ghost had wavy hair and a thick brown mustache and called himself Jack. Another witness claimed that the ghost he saw was in the form of a young girl.

"The ghosts were as real as you and I, except that they appeared from thin air."

There were no reports of damage or attempts towards harm by the apparitions. Nonetheless, Excalibur and Sabra pursued the ghosts, chasing them beyond the city borders and into the desert, where an explosive display of pyrotechnics and sound ensued.

When the battle was over, the heroes returned to Jerusalem. While none of them would comment openly on the matter, they assured the Israeli government that the crisis had passed and the threat neutralized.

—Continued in EXCALIBUR #121

CHAOS IN ISLA SUERTE

VOLCANO THE LEAST OF ISLAND'S PROBLEM

Molly Watson -BUGLE

Chaos rained down on the citizens of Isla Suerte in the Caribbean when Iron Man and his longtime nemesis, Firebrand battled in the skies over the tiny island nation.

To the horror of the populace, Firebrand ignited an explosion within the volcano that lies at the center of the island, threatening a massive eruption that would wipe out the population.

Crowds of onlookers unused to superhuman activities in the region stood agape while the battle raged overhead. It was not until debris from the nearby volcano began to fall on the spectators during their battle that they realized the imminent danger. The panic that followed bordered on chaos as local police officials attempted in vain to control the frightened population. Makeshift first-aid stations which had been set up in the streets had to be moved when ash and rock began to rain down in the vicinity.

Meanwhile, the struggle raged on above. Iron Man, who had returned a few weeks ago along with the Avengers and Fantastic Four after being believed dead, found that his old foe had not disappeared in his absence.

It is not yet known what Firebrand was after, but guests at the posh Isla Suerte resort, where a Fortune 500 conference was being held, confirmed that Iron Man was present in his function as entrepreneur Tony Stark's bodyguard.

—Continued in IRON MAN #5

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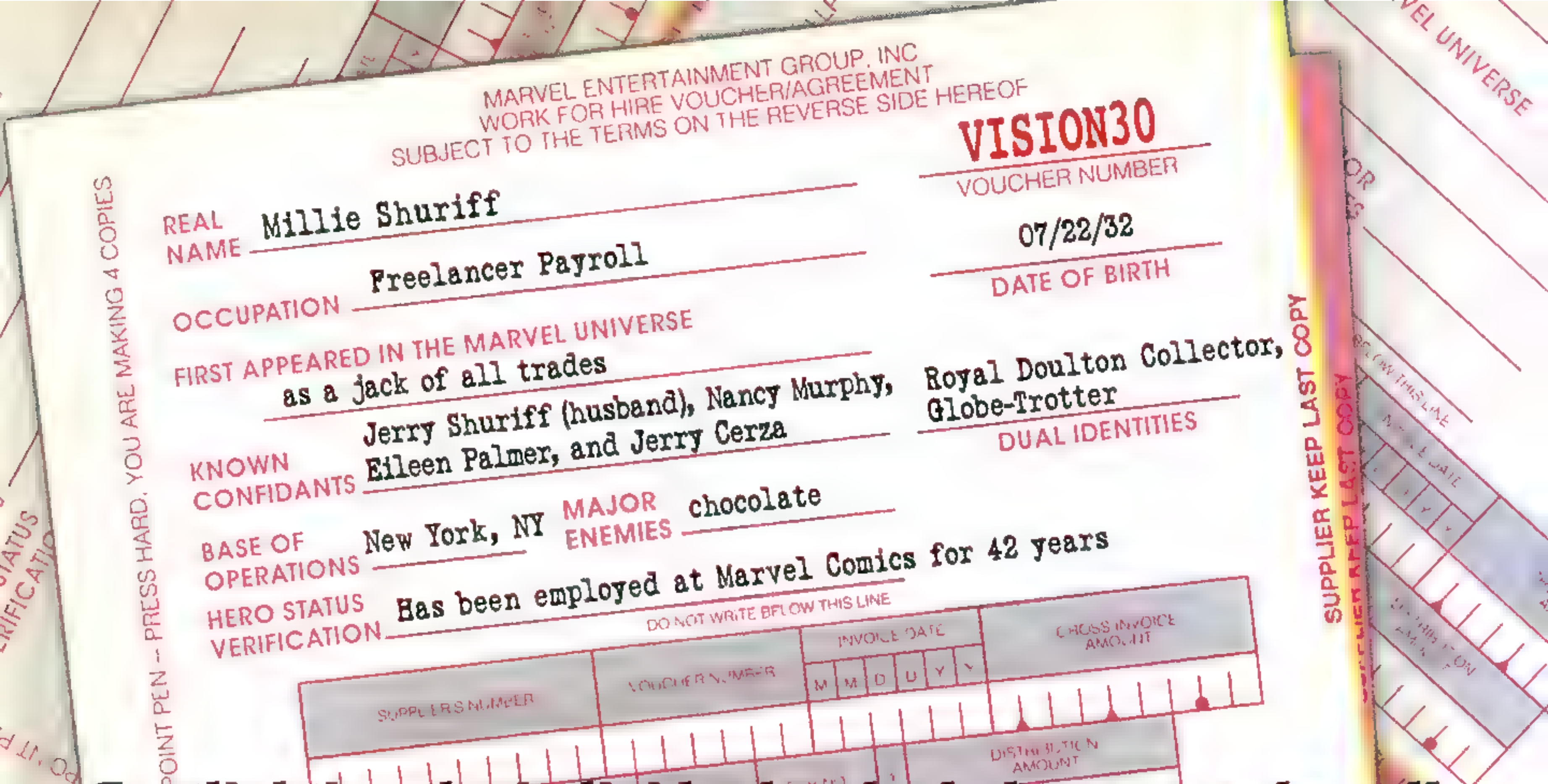


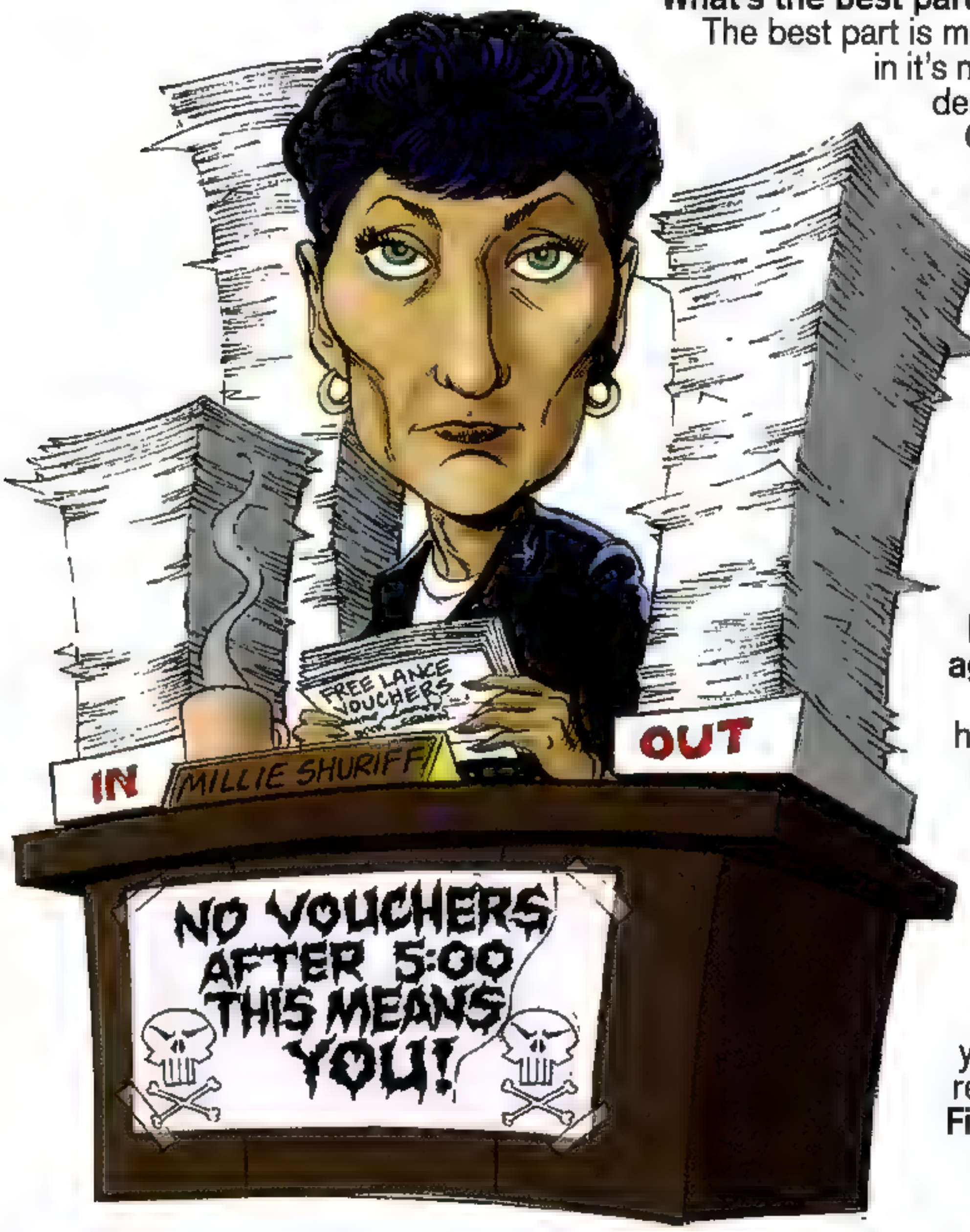
Spotlighting the individuals who help ensure that all our hard work at the House of Ideas pays off, it's . . .

UNSUNG HEROES

What is it that you do at Marvel?
I deal with the vouchers that freelancers turn in to get paid and cost out the magazines for the company.

You were hired 42 years ago. What was that like?
I started in June of 1956 when the company was still called 'Magazine Management Company'. At that time there were about 10 comic books being published here like the TWO-GUN KID. Later on I remember coming in and seeing Jack Kirby, a little guy smoking a cigar, and a very tall Stan Lee leaping around overseeing how the books were coming together.

What's the best part of your job?
The best part is meeting freelancers face-to-face. When they come in it's nice to relate to the person whose paycheck you're dealing with. A lot of them don't live in New York City so it's nice to meet them after trying to picture them on the phone.



What's your typical day like?
My typical day is filled with Marvel freelancers calling me up and asking if I sent out their check or why didn't they receive it yet or when is it coming. (Laughs) Actually, the freelancers and editors here are a very nice bunch of people. I really enjoy working with them. Everyone but that Tim Tuohy.

Who is your favorite Marvel Hero?
I know that Spider-Man and the X-Men are the popular characters but I like Daredevil. I think it's because he's able to overcome his handicap.

Finish this sentence: "If I could do it all over again, I'd definitely. . . "
. . . do it the same way because of the people that have worked here. I really enjoy working with them.

What is your favorite memory of the House of Ideas?
The 40th anniversary party they threw for me here two years ago. That was the coolest thing. It really made me feel appreciated.

Who are your heroes?
The Marvel artists because they're so gifted and I can't even draw a straight line. Especially the young ones. I think it's great that they have such remarkable talent.

Final comments.
When I get downstairs, Tim Tuohy's dead.

—Rob Piotrowski

ENGINES OF DESTRUCTION:

Machine Man / Cable / Bastion

He's undoubtedly earned his place in the X-Men Villains' Hall of Fame. His agenda is simple: to exterminate mutantkind. He's already brought mutant hatred to a scorching boil, unleashed new and improved Sentinels on his prey, blown up the X-Mansion and surgically planted a bomb in Cyclops' chest. His name is Bastion and he means T-r-o-u-b-l-e with a capital T for the X-Men.

Thankfully, after all his stunts during the Zero: Tolerance crossover, S.H.I.E.L.D. has placed him under arrest. Still, the question remains: who, or what, is Bastion? Writers Michael (EXCALIBUR) Higgins and Karl (SONIC THE HEDGE HOG) Bollers know the answer, and in February and March's one-two annual punch, Bastion's shady past will finally be exposed.

"Basically, Bastion has been a major thorn in the X-universe and while they've come close to revealing his origin, it's never actually been done," explains Higgins on the stories. "So this time we reveal his origin to all those readers who have gone through Operation: Zero Tolerance and come out saying: Wait a minute! Who is this guy anyways? At the same time, it more or less brings back Machine Man."

The first annual, CABLE/MACHINE MAN '98, picks up where readers last saw Bastion, under S.H.I.E.L.D. custody. But keeping him silent and under wraps is an entirely different matter. Instead, Bastion goes through a metamorphosis which allows him to break out and become the next fugitive. Don't expect Cable and Machine Man to band together immediately in hot pursuit either. It's just circumstances and a common foe that bring the two heroes face-to-face, that and perhaps a disturbing fact.

"We're introduced to Bastion who's going through this genesis into something new, something different," reveals Bollers. "We see him go through a transition throughout the entire story that's kinda related to Cable and Machine Man's involvement. In the second annual, MACHINE MAN/BASTION '98, we see where that genesis evolved from because we learn of his origin and we see where he goes with that. They balance each other, with one explaining his transformation into this new thing and the second explaining where he came from and how he could have possibly gotten to this point to begin with"

Yet why use Machine Man at all? The hero formerly known as X-51 is nothing more than a failed military army experiment. Why not have Cable call his X-buds and come trash Bastion once and for all? Come on, despite his membership with the Avengers, Machine Man really hasn't been a major player for a while. Yet both Bollers and Higgins agree, considering who created Machine Man, it's about time he got the 90's revitalization treatment and the same respect as his brothers-in-arms. And they have their fingers crossed that this will act as a springboard for a future Machine Man series.

"In my mind, what made comics what they are today is Jack Kirby," reasons Higgins. "I think he's the greatest force in the whole history of comics. And when I realize that he had spent so little time on Machine Man, I feel there's a lot of untapped potential there. This is the same man who created Thor, Hulk and The Fantastic Four. Machine Man shouldn't be seen as some second bit loser, he should be seen as the final step in this great legacy Kirby left behind."

Bollers adds that not only is this Machine Man's moment in the sun, but his presence makes perfect sense in the

ongoing X-Men theme.

"It was a natural progression because Cable is a mutant and Machine Man is a machine and an artificial intelligence. The story kind of involves the Sentinels; Mike and I were discussing the way the X-Men comic has become not only a book about mankind vs. mutants, but we've seen machines evolve to take place in their struggle between man and mutant with the Sentinels."

In fact, one of Higgins' favorite scenes in the second annual centers around the robotic hero and the choices he is forced to make. "Even though he's not a real man, but a Machine Man, the fact is his choice really is a turning point in this story. The conflict that goes on with that character is to me the highlight of the whole storyline."

Besides the main thrust, there is a parallel story running with Cable. Nate Summers will begin to examine his life compared to how it could have been if he had remained in the future. Cable will eventually realize he's stuck with his role and is merely an unwilling servant of fate.

Okay, enough already, let's not beat around the bush anymore. Who exactly is Bastion? Well (looks around), the secret is it's M....oops, almost gave it away. Phew, that was close. However, Higgins was kind enough to help satisfy any readers' curiosity with a major clue. "This story will pick up on threads that have been mysteries since Chris Claremont was on the book and wraps up storylines from not only that long ago but straight through to the current Zero: Tolerance story. It has a lot of old continuity and events coming together to make sense as one piece finally."

Taking Bastion down for the count will be no easy feat. He's already had Cable on the ropes so how can two heroes even hope to take down a foe that almost destroyed the X-Men? Their answer may lie in an unexpected twist of events. "If you take Cable who is a telepath, what happens when he comes in contact with a mind of a robotic entity like Machine Man?" poses Higgins. "Maybe something different occurs, allowing them to deal with a situation the X-Men haven't."

Higgins promises while the annuals contain all the action and startling revelation a heart can take, they go a little further. "I'm tired of stories that don't have a payoff and go on and on forever. This is a payoff kind of story. It not only pays off in itself, it also pays off on stuff that has been left unresolved in a lot of X-Men continuity over the years. It gives us a chance to clean some of the slate and maybe start some new mysteries."

New mysteries? How about solving some old ones like how Cadbury gets the creamy caramel inside the Caramilk bar. Or maybe something easier, like the secret of Stonehenge or the Great Pyramids. Actually, it turns out Higgins and Bollers know those too, but hey, that's a tale for another day.

—Bryan Cairns

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7524 Slayer
7621 Smashing Pumpkins
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Resurrection. It's arguably the only thing that separates comic books from real life. Not counting the super powers, outerworldly invaders and multicolored tights that, suspiciously enough, always look great on everybody (except that Foggy Nelson—man, was he a sight in DD's duds). Regardless, being raised from the dead is a pretty big deal even in a universe where it's not all together uncommon. And, as usual, the return of certain characters from the afterlife is more influential than others. So, once again, just in case you were wondering, here are . . .

THE FIVE MOST SIGNIFICANT RESURRECTIONS IN THE MARVEL UNIVERSE

JEAN GREY [a.k.a. Marvel Girl & Phoenix]
Resurrected In: FANTASTIC FOUR #286 / X-FACTOR #1
How It Happened: While returning to Earth after a space adventure, Marvel Girl volunteered to manually pilot the X-Men's shuttle through a dangerous solar flare while her fellow teammates secured themselves in the ship's shielded life-cell. As the shuttle careened to earth, Jean was exposed to intense radiation and saved from imminent doom thanks to the Phoenix force, an entity of pure force derived from the psyches of all living beings in the universe. The Phoenix force had felt Jean's concern for her teammates and offered to rescue them. When Marvel Girl agreed, the Phoenix force stole her physical form as well as a portion of Jean's consciousness and piloted the ship to safety. Once back on Earth, the X-Men mistook the all-powerful entity as the true Jean Grey. Meanwhile, the real Marvel Girl began a slow healing process in a suspended sleep beneath Jamaica Bay.

Due to the Phoenix force's unbridled passion—both good and malicious—the Jean impostor was later transformed into the Dark Phoenix who destroyed a sun and, consequently, a nearby planet in its solar system. As a result, she was sentenced to death by Empress Lilandra of the Shi'Ar Empire. Although her teammates fought valiantly for her release, their efforts were for naught. Since the Phoenix force had originally based itself on Jean Grey's consciousness as well as her physical form, Jean's ideologies were ingrained into its psyche. Hence, Phoenix realized the threat her existence posed to the entire cosmos and destroyed herself, leaving her fellow X-Men to mourn what they thought was the passing of Miss Grey.

But alas, that was not the end of our red-tressed heroine! Some years later, when her wounds finally healed, the real Jean was released from her suspended sleep. Found by the Mighty Avengers, Marvel Girl was promptly reunited with Scott "That sure was tricky" Summers. Some time later, Jean donned the codename Phoenix as a symbol of the obstacles she had overcome.
Significance: From forming X-Factor to subduing Sabretooth to helping defeat Onslaught, Jean Grey has made more contributions to the betterment and safety of the Marvel Universe since her return than you could count on two hands, or four if you happen to have a clone. But that's a whole other ball of wax named Maddy Pryor and this, after all, is an article about resurrections, so forget we even mentioned it!
More Important Stuff: Jean Grey also played a much more passive (but no less important) role in the Marvel Universe. As Redd, she traveled forward in time with hubby Scott Summers to raise their techno-organically-enhanced-potential-savior-of-life-as-we-know-it son, Cable [see sidebar].
The Gist: Had Jean Grey not re-entered the land of the living, Xavier's students might not have emerged unscathed from many a close call. Also, young Cable would have grown up without a dominant mother-figure and hey, don't you think that kid had it hard enough as it is!

STEVE ROGERS [a.k.a. Captain America]
Resurrected In: AVENGERS #4
How It Happened: Waaayyy back in 1945 Cap and Bucky attempted to stop a drone plane that Baron Von Strucker was controlling by making a leap for the aircraft. Seconds later the plane exploded, sending Bucky to that big sidekick comfort zone in the sky and Cap into the icy waters off the coast of Newfoundland. Fortunately, Steve Rogers was frozen and preserved in an ice floe, and later found and brought ashore by a tribe of Eskimos.

Worshiped as a god (albeit one who couldn't make his way out of the giant ice cube he was stuck in), Steve's frozen body was tossed into the drink once more by an enraged Sub-Mariner. Soon after, he was found by the Avengers. And although he had been frozen for almost twenty years, Cap's super-soldier serum allowed him to survive the ordeal, and within no time he was battling injustice once more, this time as a member of Earth's Mightiest Heroes.
Significance: Since his very first appearance in the modern Marvel Universe, Captain America has been a cornerstone of the Avengers, leading them to numerous victories over the forces of evil. Furthermore, as a solo adventurer he has been successful at countering the malicious plots of mega-villains such as the Red Skull. Although other would-be heroes such as U.S.Agent have attempted to take his place, circumstances have made it blatantly obvious that there is only one Captain America. And the world needs him!

"I think Cap's continued survival in the face of indomitable odds—including being on ice—is a symbol of hope to the rest of the heroes in the Marvel Universe. [It shows that] . . . a fighting spirit can never truly die and that heroism will always find a way to persevere."

Mark Waid (Writer CAPTAIN AMERICA)

More Important Stuff: Surprisingly enough, there was a time in Steve Rogers' career when he actually became disenchanted with the American government and created the identity of a character named Nomad, a hero who had no patriotic ties. When Rogers later returned to his role as Captain America, the Nomad persona was eventually adopted by Jack Monroe who, after a stint as Cap's sidekick, began a crime-fighting career of his own.
The Gist: If Captain America had not been revived from his icy sleep, the Avengers would undoubtedly not be what they are today. Furthermore, the word 'Nomad' would essentially be nothing more than a synonym for 'homeless guy'.

NORMAN OSBORN [a.k.a. the original Green Goblin]
Resurrected In: AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #418
How It Happened: Nobody's really sure as of yet. All we do know is that Norman was thought dead by just about everyone including his son, Harry, after he was impaled by his own Goblin Glider.
Significance: Although not yet fully revealed, Norman Osborn's agenda has already caused serious problems for Spidey. And how! Although back from the great beyond for only a short while, Norman has already managed to formulate the entire Spider clone saga, kill Ben Reilly, buy out half of the Daily Bugle, and put a one million dollar bounty on Spider-Man's head, causing him to change his super-heroing identity not once, but four times! From the looks of it, the Green Goblin's greatest new weapon may be the power tie!

"One of Spider-Man's greatest enemies is out there and knows his secret identity and could strike at any time. Essentially, if there's a creak in the house, that could be Norman [Osborn]. This could cost Peter his life and the lives of everyone he cares about and he knows it."

Tom DeFalco (Writer AMAZING SPIDER-MAN)

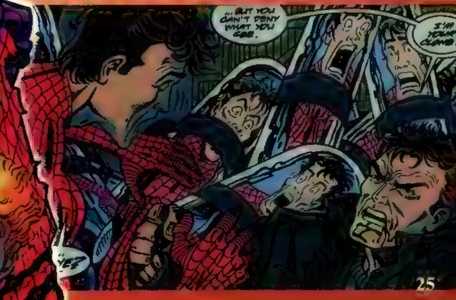
More Important Stuff: Again, although it hasn't been fully revealed, keen-eyed Spidey fans know that Norman Osborn is the man behind Mary Jane's mysterious—or is that misleading—miscarriage.
The Gist: If Norman Osborn had not returned from what everybody thought was the sound and eternal sleep of the dead, Spider-Man might just have lived happily ever after.

HEROES RETURN
Resurrected In: HEROES REBORN: THE RETURN Limited Series, CAPTAIN AMERICA (Series II) #1, IRON MAN (Series II) #1, AVENGERS (series II) #1, INCREDIBLE HULK #460 & THOR (Series II) #1.
How It Happened: When Charles Xavier's subconscious gave birth to the immense evil of Onslaught, all of Earth's heroes gathered to face him. After an epic battle, Onslaught was transformed into a being of pure psionic energy and all non-mutant heroes present thrust themselves into his essence in hopes of containing their foe. Among the martyrs were: Thor, Human Torch, Thing, Captain America, Scarlet Witch, Sub-Mariner, She-Hulk, Vision, Giant-Man, Wasp, Crystal, Hawkeye, Iron Man, an unwilling Doctor Doom, Sue and Reed Richards, and finally, Bruce Banner.

For months following the battle, these men and women were mourned bitterly as the Marvel Universe struggled to deal with the deaths of the greatest heroes it had ever known. However, unbeknownst to the world, the heroes were actually alive and well— not to mention unaware that they had actually died and were leading radically different lives—in a pocket universe created by Franklin Richards, son of Mr. Fantastic and the Invisible Woman of the FF.

It was not until Ashema, a member of the all-powerful Celestials, presented Franklin Richards with an ultimatum to destroy one of his worlds that this adventure came to an end. Although troubled, Franklin was able to warn his parents of the fact that he had chosen to destroy the world he had created for them. They, in turn, were able to rally the rest of the heroes and lead an escape back into the one true Marvel Universe reality via the Negative Zone. Before long, the greatest heroes of the Marvel Universe were back where they belonged, and once again regained the lives they had so selflessly sacrificed months earlier.
Significance: The return of the Earth's heroes is of the utmost significance to the population of the modern Marvel Universe and its fans. Their combined potential is literally unfathomable.
More Important Stuff: The return of the heroes resulted in the publication of the first ever THOR #1!
The Gist: If the heroes had remained dead in our reality, the Marvel Universe would never have been the same. And the powers that be would have been forced to spend eternity thinking up suitable punishments for that little Franklin punk!

BEN REILLY
Resurrected In: WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #117 & [as the Scarlet Spider] #118
How It Happened: Once upon a time there was a boy who possessed the proportionate abilities of a spider. His name



was Peter Parker. Because he was a good guy, bad guys and gals always seemed bent on harassing him. One such villain was Professor Miles Warren, A.K.A. the Jackal. A revolutionary geneticist/biochemist, Warren perfected a cloning procedure that saw the Parker kid duplicated in the form of an exact clone. For his part, the true Peter confronted and, in turn, seemingly destroyed both the Jackal and his own dupe only to have them both resurface five years later (about 20 years for us readers).

Now on his own, Peter's clone decided to 'get a life' and dubbed himself Ben (after Peter's favorite uncle and guardian) Reilly (as in his Aunt May's maiden name). Before long, Ben was bitten by the crime-fighting bug and became the Scarlet Spider. Some time later, an inevitable confrontation between the revived Jackal, Ben, and Peter proved that Ben was—ready for this?—the real Peter Parker and Peter himself was the Spider clone! Realizing the importance of his life with wife Mary Jane and floored by this revelation, Peter stepped aside and let Ben take the Spidey reins. Fitted with a new costume, Ben's new Spider-Man took to the streets to kick some butt.

After a short stint as Spider-Man, Ben Reilly gave his life battling the newly returned Green Goblin [see Norman Osborn]. At that time it was revealed that Ben had been the real Spider clone and Peter Parker was really, well . . . Peter Parker after all. Seems that the whole thing had been a plot cooked up by the evil Norm Osborn.

Significance: Once he reappeared, Ben Reilly caused a whole web full of problems for Peter Parker. Convinced that he was his own clone, Petey went through a major identity crisis. Near the end there, he even resigned himself to a comfortable life with his wife, Mary Jane. (Well, sort of.) Then, when the true plot was revealed, Parker got a new lease on life and hit the crime-fighting scene with a new vigor.

More Important Stuff: Although by nature originality is usually not a clone's strong suit, Ben added some unique elements to the Spider-Man persona like new uses and forms of webbing. Furthermore, during his tenure as the web-slinger, all of the Spidey titles were appropriately reworked with the Scarlet Spider namesake! In retrospect, it's also fair to say that the entire clone saga made readers everywhere appreciate plain old Peter Parker like never before.

The Gist: If Ben Reilly had not returned, Peter Parker's crime-fighting career may not have received the resurgence of energy it desperately needed and poor Mary Jane may have never known what it was like having a normal husband. Even if it was only for one afternoon.

Most Significant Births

NATHAN CHRISTOPHER SUMMERS
Parents: Scott Summers & Madelyne Pryor (clone of Jean Grey)
Born In: UNCANNY X-MEN #201

As Cable, Nathan Summers—or Dayspring if you prefer—is destined to face the dreaded Apocalypse in a battle that will decide the fate of life on earth as we know it. So is it really any wonder that the guy's got his own Askani Clan of followers in the far-flung future?

MAY PARKER
Parents: Mary Jane Watson-Parker & Peter Parker, Spider-Man
Born In: AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #418

Although believed dead as a result of a miscarriage, there is clearly more to the mysteries surrounding the baby May tragedy than meets the eye. At this point, all fingers point in the general direction of Norman Osborn. Regardless, if she is alive, isn't it just killing you to find out what the offspring of the Amazing Spider-Man might be like?

FRANKLIN RICHARDS
Parents: Mr. Fantastic & The Invisible Woman
Born In: FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #6

Franklin Richards is perhaps the most powerful individual in the entire Marvel Universe (and then some). He created the pocket universe after the Onslaught affair and as if that wasn't enough, he also had the opportunity to erase the true Marvel Universe reality in the same shot. All this at the ripe old age of four!

LUNA
Parents: Quicksilver & Crystal
Born In: FANTASTIC FOUR #240

Although her mutant powers haven't yet manifested (if indeed they ever will), little Luna is bound for greatness seeing as how her pop is one of the most recognizable mutants in Marvel history and her mama's a member of the Inhumans' royal family (as well as the Avengers and the FF once upon a time). And if all else fails, she can take after her grandfather, Magneto, one of the most dangerous villains the Marvel Universe has ever known!

NICHOLAS, CHRISTOPHER, and MATTHEW: THE HARRAS TRIPLETS
Parents: Ann and Bob Harras, Marvel's Editor-in Chief and his wife.

Since their pop is responsible for just about the entire Marvel Universe, we think the significance of these three boys' birth can be summed up in one word: potential. Not to mention the three extra flying dictionaries Tim Tuohy will have to learn to dodge! "Ha! Whoa, close one! Hey! Upff!"

—Robert Piotrowski

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TIME SLIP
FANTASTIC FOUR

Welcome to the Marvel Universe that would have been if today's hottest creators had been around at the birth of Marvel Comics. Think of this as the world that might have been. Think of it as the world that might still be coming.

Dan Jurgens burst onto the comics scene as one of the most talented writer/pencilers with such titles as BOOSTER GOLD and THE LEGION OF SUPER HEROES at DC Comics. Since then, he's killed the man of steel in "The Death Of Superman," launched a brand-new Spider-Man title with THE SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN, and is now writing the adventures of Asgard's favorite son in THE MIGHTY THOR. Dan brings his unique ability to shake up the status quo of core characters in Marvel's famous first family—the Fantastic Four.

All should be aware of the facts behind their incredible powers and origins. It's the story of Reed Richards, his best friend, Ben Grimm, Reed's fiancée Sue and her brother Johnny. Together they launched themselves into space using Reed's experimental rocket in the attempt to win the space race. Fate, however, had a different plan as their ship was bombarded by cosmic rays—rays that would change them forever. Reed became the elastic Mr. Fantastic. Sue Storm became an Invisible Woman. Johnny Storm became a Human Torch. And Ben Grimm? He changed into a rock-encrusted thing.

But in the world of Time Slip, the world where Dan Jurgens designs the Fantastic Four, it is not so much their appearance that changes... but the very nature of their purpose and power. Here, Reed is well aware of the machinations of the subterranean villain known as the Mole Man before their reckless mission into space. The Mole Man's plan for vengeance against the humanity that spurned him was nothing short of the destruction of all life on the planet. Using the underworld creatures at his disposal to dig to the Earth's core, the Mole Man changed the mass and weight of the planet by hollowing it out. The effect of the sun's pull on Earth's orbit would mean the end of all life. This change in mass began drawing the Earth closer to the blazing inferno of the sun.

The destruction of all mankind was imminent. Only Reed Richards could devise a way to stop this terrible calamity. His plan: to launch a rocket into space and orchestrate a rain of elements upon his planet. Using technology he had invented, Richards' goal was to add mass, in the form of the elements themselves, to the Earth, thus stopping this impending disaster.

In their haste to save the world, critical shielding was left off this ship, but Reed and his crew decided to continue on their mission unprotected. Shortly after their departure, cosmic rays bombarded the vessel, striking not only the crew, but also affecting the elemental materials on board.

The ship crashed on Earth, Reed's mission seemingly a failure. But the cosmic rays had changed Reed and his crew. Soon, they discovered that the four of them had been transformed into the living embodiments of the elements themselves. More importantly, they could control the elements around them.

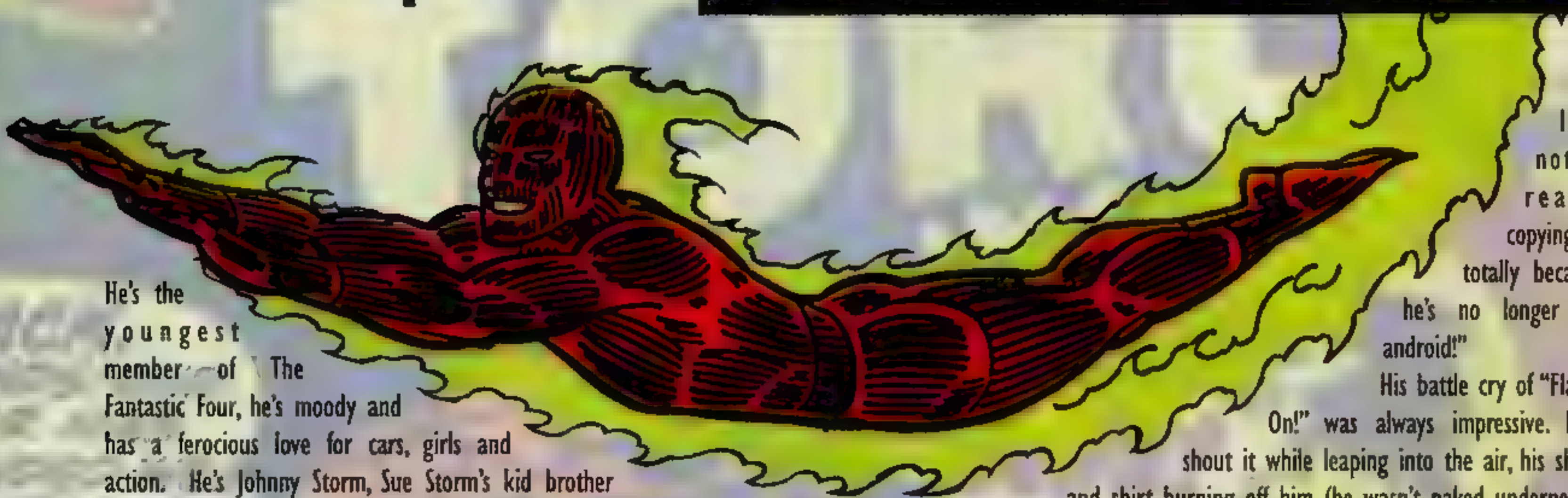
While each of them had to a certain extent become a force of nature, it was Reed's understanding of the combinations of Fire, Earth, Water and Air that allowed him to instruct his comrades how to combine their powers to add mass to the Earth. Reed accomplished this by using his water-like powers in association with Sue's wind abilities, Johnny's flame and Ben's rocky, earth-based attributes.

Of course, by the time the Earth was saved, it was a very different planet. Many had run into the tunnels that now mazed through the planet to escape what had happened on the surface. Many of those became lost. Others embraced this new world... and the heroes who had saved it... the heroes of the elements themselves...

FLAME ON!

ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES

Johnny Storm, The Human Torch



He's the youngest member of The Fantastic Four, he's moody and has a ferocious love for cars, girls and action. He's Johnny Storm, Sue Storm's kid brother and Marvel's first teenage hero.

As everybody and their dog knows, Johnny got his powers alongside Reed Richards, Ben Grimm and his sister Susan when their experimental rocket was penetrated by Cosmic Rays. While Reed and Ben had valid reasons for going (Ben was the pilot and Reed was the designer), Sue and Johnny's motivation was pretty weak. When Reed tried to keep Sue from coming, she protested "Don't say it, Reed! I'm your fiancée, where you go, I go!" Johnny throws in, "And I'm taggin' along with Sis so it's settled!"

The rocket crashed, all four felt different and began transforming. Watching Reed and Ben change, a horrified Johnny yells, "You've turned into monsters...Both of you!! It's those rays, those terrible Cosmic Rays!" In the next panel, Johnny bursts into flame, but that doesn't stop him from talking: "Now I know why I've been feeling so warm! Look at me," he cries. "When I get excited, I can feel my body begin to blaze!" He takes it well, though. Flying upwards, he's "lighter than air! I can fly, look...I can fly!"

Mr. Storm wasn't the first Human Torch at Marvel Comics. That honor belonged to a heroic android in the 1940s. He appeared in the very first MARVEL COMIC with flaming sidekick Toro (as the Torch was a robot, Toro should be considered the first HUMAN Torch). He also co-founded THE INVADERS with Namor, Captain America and Bucky. This Torch was later deactivated by the Mad Thinker and resurrected as a West Coast Avenger.

When Stan Lee started the Fantastic Four, he wanted a connection to early Marvel history, so he used the basic torch concept. "I brought back The Torch when I was doing the FANTASTIC FOUR and needed four characters," Stan Lee explains. "I had come up with The Thing, Mr. Fantastic and Sue, so I wanted something totally different for the fourth guy and I wanted a kid brother for Sue.

"I didn't want him to be the typical teenager, so that when Reed and Sue married, he would be the brother-in-law. I never knew of a comic book that had a brother-in-law and he would be a little bit of an itch," he notes. "I figured the original Torch had been an adult, so I'm not really copying it totally because he's no longer an android!"

His battle cry of "Flame On!" was always impressive. He'd shout it while leaping into the air, his shoes and shirt burning off him (he wasn't naked underneath, he was wearing his FF jumpsuit composed of unstable molecules!). "Flame On!" had the right mix of youthful exuberance and adventurous daring. Stan came up with it because "I couldn't think of anything else," he laughs. "A guy is bursting into flame, so what else are you gonna say?"

Unlike The Thing, girls were never a problem for this member of the Fantastic Four. Johnny Storm started out dating conventionally, a chaste romance with high school girl Doris Evans ("Dorrie" to her friends) but, being part of a glamorous super hero team, he quickly realized there were other fish in the Universe.

He had more alien chicks than Captain Kirk! If there was a babe in the microverse (there was, Pearla), he found her. If a blue-skinned alien king had a blue babe daughter, he found her, too. Johnny was so smitten with that one, he even tried to help her people attack Earth! In the SECRET WARS, he finds the only hot-blooded alien girl on the planet and, to a jealous Colossus' amazement, dumps her!

Even when Johnny attempted to have an ordinary relationship, it didn't work out. He fell in love with Frankie Raye, an ordinary college girl who just happened to look like a super model (in the Marvel Universe, every girl looks like a super model, except for Aunt May and Agatha Harkness!). Her only hang-up was freaking out when he used his flame. When this relationship 'heated up', Frankie revealed she was the stepdaughter of Professor Phineas Horton, who built the original Human Torch, and that she had been accidentally soaked in his chemicals. She was a female Human Torch! After several exciting issues of her as an honorary FF member, calling herself "Nova", she dumped Johnny to become a Herald of Galactus. Johnny became the only guy who ever lost out in love to a 28-foot, twenty-ton Giant who wore a helmet that resembled the Chrysler Building!

Johnny's infatuation with aliens eventually caught up with him, when he married Ben Grimm's former girlfriend, the blind Alicia Masters (The Thing was still on that Battleworld planet from the SECRET WARS, trying to get his life together as the Johnny/Alicia romance heated up.) After many months of blissful wedlock, Johnny found out that he had actually married Lyja, a shape-changing Skrull, the ickiest alien race in the Marvel Universe! (Talk about mixed marriages...!)

If that wasn't enough, Lyja had another bombshell—she was pregnant! Happily, this was only a twisted ploy and Johnny soon found himself a free man. After all, not telling your husband that you're a shape-changing Skrull spy is a lot more serious than "Irreconcilable differences!" The world wasn't told of this, however, and only believes that Johnny and Alicia are divorced.

Johnny's always been short-tempered, usually punctuating arguments by bursting into flame and flying away. He usually protests being bossed around by the others or challenging their motives. These outbursts led to one of his greatest mistakes—In FF #4, Johnny runs away and lives in a Bowery flophouse. While there, he flips through a battered 1940s issue of SUB-MARINER Comics and marvels at that character's amazing strength. Considering what happens

next, Johnny should have just run to the nearest comic shop and sold it!

Thugs in the flophouse tell him the vagrant in the other bed has the same kind of strength as the Sub-Mariner. When the bearded old vagrant refuses to demonstrate his power by ripping a phone book in two, they attack him with fists and clubs.

Before Johnny's eyes, the bum beats them all. As he has amnesia, Johnny lights up a finger and shaves the bum's beard to jog his memory...It's none other than Namor, the Sub-Mariner himself! Unfortunately, when Johnny drops him back into the ocean, Namor sees Atlantis in ruins, returns to the surface, calls Johnny "a fool" and declares war on the human race. The Torch rejoins the FF, and they narrowly defeat Namor but, to Johnny's chagrin, there's a simmering infatuation between Namor and his sister.

Knocking out Johnny's flame became an unofficial pastime of the FF's enemies. Dr. Doom would put him in airless rooms (Johnny screams "I'm helpless!" again on the cover of FF #5!), various androids would blow it out, Galactus extinguished it with his eyes and the Hulk would merely clap, letting the shockwave knock his flame out. Spidey could quash it with foamy webbing, Namor would beat it out of him and Ben would smash open the nearest water pipe and douse it out.

The FF was unlike any other super-group in that it was a family. The Avengers, Defenders and other groups might have disagreements and break up, but it didn't have the emotional impact of an FF breakup. Marvel's first super-team was, first and foremost, a family and when the team would break up, great pains were taken to show all four of the team suffering without the others. The film "The Ice Storm" has a character looking at the FF's symbolism as a family. It's very telling that, for the FF, the greatest tragedy wasn't being defeated, but that bickering and infighting would bring them down and break them apart. In the early days, Johnny would run away every time they bickered, sometimes to 'cool off', sometimes just to get away.

Johnny wasn't just Reed's brother-in-law or Sue's brother; he was the 'kid,' the one to look at things emotionally in a way that Reed, Sue and Ben couldn't. Johnny's had more than his share of heroic moments. He defeated the Moleman's giant monster from FF #1 and his whole army of monsters; he defeated the Miracleman and later proved pivotal in many of the FF's battles. In the Galactus Trilogy, it's Johnny who is sent across the Universe to retrieve the Ultimate Nullifer, the only weapon that can stop the all-powerful Galactus.

Uatu the Watcher sent Johnny because he was the youngest (and would therefore act without thinking) but the trip literally blows his mind. "We're like ants," he screams, "Ants! Ants!" Happily, the Watcher wipes the Torch's mind of this memory so he's no longer bug-obsessed. Besides FF and co-starring in an occasional MARVEL TEAM-UP, Johnny had his own ongoing series in STRANGE TALES.

He's always been protective of his older sister. This may be due to losing their mother Mary in an auto accident while they were children. Sue obviously mothered her younger brother. Occasionally, Johnny has gotten Sue upset by being over-protective (like when he found a picture of Namor hidden on her bookshelf). He also stood by Sue when she and Reed broke up (briefly) and when they thought Reed died.

Being the Human Torch isn't all fun and games. Johnny gave it up when he found out a small child doused himself with gasoline and set himself on fire in an attempt to imitate him. He only stayed in the hero game when the alien The Beyonder took him on an IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE-like journey to show him how his life would have been different.

Some of his enemies were far beneath him, especially the cowboy/mutant, the Texas Twister, the greatest insult Marvel ever made against the Lone Star State this side of Razorback. There was also The Painter of a thousand perils; The Wizard (he seemed impressive at first, but watching everyone in the Marvel universe this side of Ant-Man defeat him 200 times in a row takes the edge off his claim at being 'The world's smartest man'), and Paste Pot Pete, a villain whose only weapon was a sticky glue gun. He was so lame, he changed his name to 'The Trapster' to try to earn more respect. He failed!

The greatest slight Johnny ever faced was in the 1978 FANTASTIC FOUR cartoon. Reed, Sue and Ben were there but no Johnny! He was replaced by a dreadful, flying, wisecracking R2-D2 knockoff named H.E.R.B.I.E. the Robot! (STAR WARS had come out less than a year earlier.) In the comics, Johnny explained he wasn't in the cartoon because "I wasn't in town when the contracts were signed." The Fantastic Four had their revenge, though; when H.E.R.B.I.E made his debut in the comics, the plucky robot was revealed to be an insane serial killer.

What made the Torch so appealing was his realistic attitude. He was a rebel—he even parted his hair on the left side instead of the right and wore a red FF jumpsuit when everyone else wore blue. Johnny preferred fast cars to Pogo Planes, the simple joys of racing around instead of flying. (Stan Lee said in a recent interview that he wanted realism: "That's why when Johnny Storm drove a car, it wasn't a 'Whiz Bang, he drove a Corvette.")

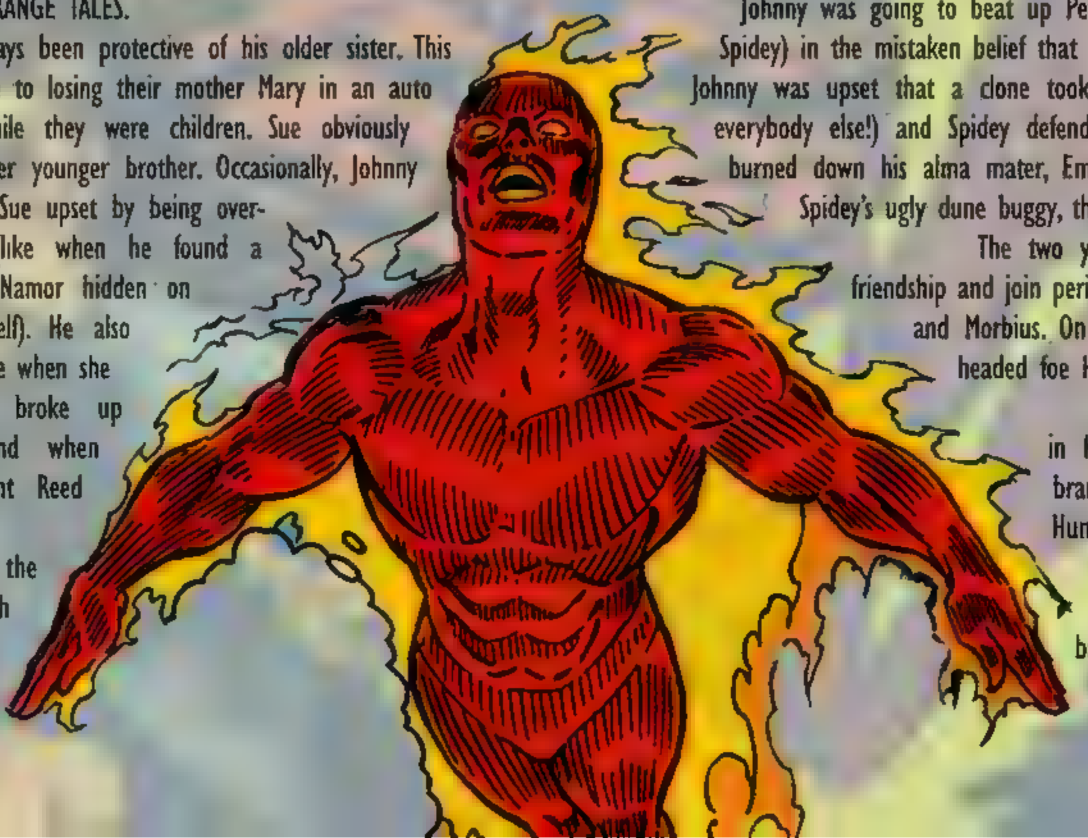
Outside of Ben and Reed, his closest friend in the hero business is Spider-Man. The two celebrate Christmas morning annually together on top of the Statue of Liberty, drinking cocoa and exchange gifts. In MARVEL TEAM-UP #1, they spend Christmas Eve discussing their problems, fighting Sandman and keeping a woman from being mugged. (This woman later turns out to be Misty Knight, Iron Fist's bionic girlfriend.)

Their relationship wasn't always so rosy. In AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #1, Johnny jeered him when he tried to join the FF for a salary, "You got the wrong place, pal—this isn't General Motors!" In AMAZING #3, Peter Parker quit being Spidey until he was moved by a speech the Torch gave at Midtown High. (And just what was so exciting about Johnny's lecture? His stirring, JFK declaration that made Spidey live again? "Never give up.")

Other incidents between the two came fast and furious. Spidey jealously attacks the Torch at a party, just to stir things up. On another occasion, Johnny was going to beat up Peter Parker (he has no idea Peter is Spidey) in the mistaken belief that he was having an affair with Dorrie. Johnny was upset that a clone took Spidey's place (as was just about everybody else!) and Spidey defended the Torch when he accidentally burned down his alma mater, Empire State University. He even built Spidey's ugly dune buggy, the Spider-Mobile.

The two young adventurers have an informal friendship and join periodically to fight the likes of Annhilus and Morbius. On his own, Johnny beat Spidey's flat-headed foe Hammerhead.

With Johnny and the FF reunited in HEROES RETURN and back in their brand-spankin'-new FANTASTIC FOUR, the Human Torch will continue as an important member of the Marvel Universe. Watch out for those Skrull babes, Johnny!

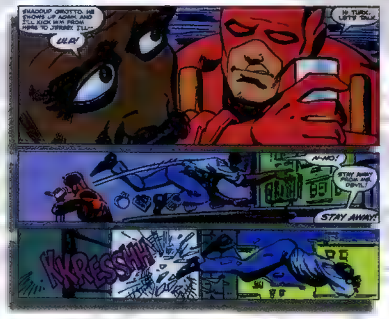


—Pat Jankiewicz

DAREDEVIL'S FAVORITE HOLE-IN-THE-WALL!

As the writer/artist of DAREDEVIL, Frank Miller produced some of the grimmest and grittiest — not to mention most unforgettable — comics ever created. But one thing a lot of fans forget about ol' Frank is that he also had a great sense of humor —as evidenced by this month's Silliest Moments!

Frank was responsible for introducing Josie's Bar into the dark world of Daredevil. Josie's was always described as "a grimy saloon just off South Street"—and it served as the seedy dive where DD would go when he needed to rough up some informants to find out the word on the street.



A running joke was that every time DD showed up at Josie's, the front window of the bar would be smashed. The first time this occurred was in DD #170, during the classic Kingpin Trilogy. A two-bit punk named Turk was drowning his sorrows at Josie's, having been kicked out of the mob after DD made him look bad.

Turk bragged that if he ever saw Daredevil again, he would "kick him from here to Jersey." You can imagine Turk's surprise when he turned around and saw that DD was sitting right next to him! Turk was so spooked, he ran right through the front window!

The glass was replaced a month later, as shown in DD #171. Unfortunately for Josie, DD's alter ego, Matt Murdock showed up undercover, trying to dig up some dirt.

As always seems to happen in these situations, a fight broke out. With one punch, Matt sent two thugs flying through the window, while a hapless Josie moaned, "Aw, mister...please...not the...window..."

A month later, Josie had replaced the glass once again, only to have that deadbeat, Turk, attempt to run through it again as he fled from DD. Josie pleaded with DD to save her storefront, saying, "DD, please—that's three this week! You know how much them things cost?"

With a flip of his billy club, DD stopped Turk from smashing the window, and Josie was spared from having to make any repairs—temporarily, at least.

In ish #182, DD was looking for the lowdown on the Kingpin, so he defenestrated a hood through Josie's window. (To "defenestrate" means "to toss someone through a window!" Really! We looked it up! See that? You learned a new word this month!)

DD entered Josie's again in ish #187, when his hyper-senses had gone out of control. When the regulars at Josie's saw that DD was in bad shape, they decided to get their revenge on this masked busybody. The best way they knew to get back at DD was, of course, to defenestrate him! Poor Josie could only sit there and cringe as her front window was shattered once again.

We haven't seen much of Josie's Bar lately, but if Josie wants to keep her joint safe in the Marvel Universe, maybe she should hire the Hulk as her bouncer!

—Barry Dutter

COLOR YOUR WORLD

By Bryan Cairns

You don't want to mess around with these two guys.

Together they have the ability to plunge many of Marvel's mightiest heroes into absolute darkness. Or with a few masterful clicks and key strokes, the duo can dazzle them with a blinding spectrum of colors. Mephisto, Thanos, Dr. Doom, Galactus, Apocalypse? Nope, guess again. Even those villains are subject to their rule. They are Chris Lichtner and Aron Lusen, better known as the coloring team Liquid Graphics, and their power is terrible.

LIQUID GRAPHICS

"Now more than ever, colorists are part of the creative team," says UNCANNY X-MEN penciler Chris Bachalo. "They can add or subtract quality. Essentially, they help make the artist look good."

Coloring can sometimes be difficult to understand, so Lichtner and Lusen explained the mechanics of the job beginning with guides. Traditionally, pencils and inks are drawn on an 11 x 17 sheet of art board and are shrunk down 65% on high quality paper. Using markers or dyes, color is added to the photocopied versions of the art. Then these guides are used by color separators, who scan in the original black and white line work on the computer and try to match up the colors with the guides. Never having been much to go with tradition, the guys at Liquid dropped the guides and have gone straight to the separations.

With the coloring usually being the last step in a comic book, you can surmise that these specialists are old pros who have been studying their craft since pre-school. Ironically, both accidentally stumbled into the field.

Lichtner ended college with a degree in business but always had a knack and passion for drawing. It was a create-your-own character contest Erik Larsen held that started Lichtner down the hallowed yellow brick road. The submission guidelines specifically required the creation also had to be colored, something he had never done before. He labored over his creation but as for how the contest catapulted his career, well, it didn't. When asked if he won, Lichtner laughed and said "God, no!"

Not one to give up, he took his portfolio to the San Diego ComicCon where it wasn't Lichtner's pencils getting all the raves but his coloring. It was then he decided to get into that aspect of the profession. He shelled out $250 for a set of markers and on his first professional submission was snatched up the following day by Extreme Studios to do guides.

"The logic was it was harder to find someone who could pick good colors than it was to train somebody to copy what's on the guide onto the screen."

While NEW MEN was Lichtner's baptism of fire in comics, he doesn't consider it to be any groundbreaking work on his part. However, it did give him the chance to work with later

Kaboom studio mate Jeff Matsuda. "All I can say is that I'm surprised Jeff stayed friends with me after that," he laughs. Gradually, Lichtner guided the entire gamut of Extreme's titles. Still, Lichtner wasn't satisfied only doing the thankless task of guides.

"When I do guides, the readers never really get to see what I did on the guides," he says. "It's always the interpretation of the separators."

On the other hand, Lusen graduated with a degree in liberal arts. However, his passion for comics and art soon got the better of him. He and Lichtner were good friends in college, so when Lichtner got a job at Extreme, he told his chum the studio was hiring. Lusen knew about computers and with a background in art, he tried out and got a job as a separator. Over the course of his time there, he probably toiled over most of Extreme's books.

Lichtner attributes part of what happened next to penciler Joe Madureira, who was at Marvel at the time. During a visit to Kaboom Studios, which Lichtner belonged to, his work caught Madureira's attention. He remarked how amazing the colors looked and asked why Lichtner didn't separate himself. Madureira then inquired if he could show the work to his own editors.

"Joe pushed very hard. I would really give him most of the credit," says Lichtner. "I can't be thankful enough."

More than ever, the time seemed right for Lichtner to strike out and do his own thing. Although he convinced his friend and future partner in crime to quit his job and join him, Lusen had his doubts from the getgo.

"I was very nervous about doing it," he confesses. "I had a job and a paycheck and now we were going out on our own, uncertain about actually getting work. I thought it was pretty risky. I think we were both nervous about how well we would do. We both had in the back of our minds it might not last very long and we might fail."

Things were slow in the beginning. Lichtner was now doing guides for Marvel while all along begging to do separations on any title. But they were reluctant to give him a whole book to do. Eventually, all the time and effort led to some covers and DEADPOOL. From there, it was all uphill. After Carlos Pacheco had seen some samples of theirs, they landed what they consider to be the coup-de-grace: coloring and separating X-MEN. Lichtner says without Pacheco's influential help, they would probably be flipping burgers somewhere. Since then, they have picked up Top Cow's ASCENSION and Marvel's FANTASTIC FOUR and IRON MAN on a regular basis. They still do covers, some promotional material and video games, but time doesn't allow much more for the guys who work almost seven days a week.

There are some rewards for the long hours, though. The two started Marvel's trend of having the colorist's name on the cover. In a recent advertisement for the revamped FANTASTIC FOUR, Liquid Graphics was listed as one of the title's selling points. Both are happy

with a job well done and Lusen says working with people who want to work with them has been a real kick. Not that there seems to be a shortage of that. Bachalo, Joe Kelly, Andy Kubert and Tim Townsend are just a few of the professionals who tout Liquid Graphics as one of the best in the business. Bachalo says the talented twosome have a knack with paint, have a flair for picking colors, are up to date on technology and know how colors will translate on different paper among other things.

So what is the secret of their success?

Part of it is hidden in their name. Originally Liquid was a label that came to the duo while watching television. Although Lusen laughed at the concept, Lichtner thought it had a certain groove and evoked a flowing image. However, Liquid has also come to represent their relationship and philosophy towards their trade.

"Aron and I almost work as one person because we work so closely it overlaps," says Lichtner. "We don't look at each other with different styles....we merge."

Besides hard work, Liquid tries to strengthen the book by adding depth, life and flash. To achieve this, they usually employ a theme on every page. "Take one page," explains Lichtner. "If you don't have a theme, that means every single color of the spectrum is represented on it. Yellows, purples, greens, browns, everything. What happens is it looks like someone threw up confetti and it's a big jumbled mess. Now a themed page may have a green theme. The backgrounds may be a bluish green and warms up with a yellow green and it harmonizes nicer. It's also easier on the eye."

Now how about a quick 101 Colors for Dummies session? What are the easiest and hardest ones to use? Blue and red have always been popular but apparently not here. Turns out grays are the favorite because they are not as harsh on the eye and thus are easier to manage. With bright colors, each one has to receive special attention because otherwise they can become offensive to the reader's eye..

Well, class is over. Being a colorist may sound like a piece of cake but can anyone do it?

"No, I don't think so," says Lichtner. "There're certain people who have an inherent sense for color just like some seem to be inherent to penciling."

Guess that leaves me out since I can't even match two socks together. And here I spent all that money on the deluxe Crayola pack. Oh well. For now, I'll leave the coloring to the mastery of Liquid.

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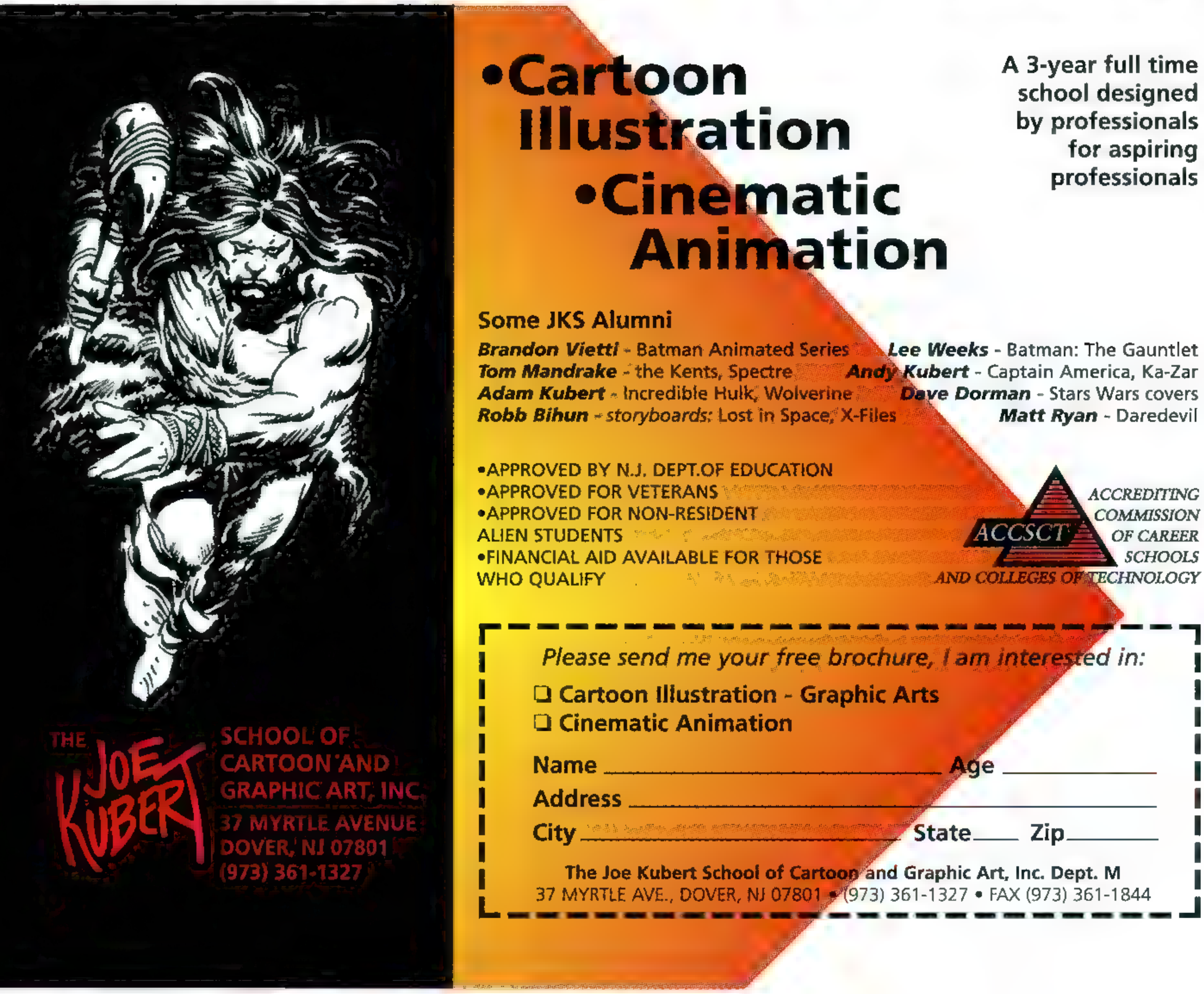
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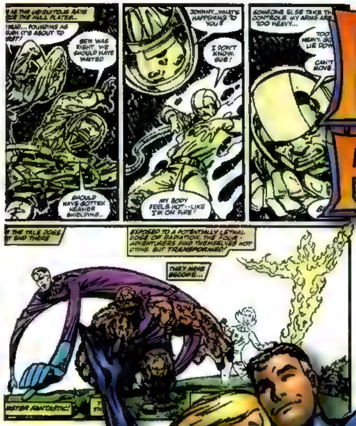


Fantastic Four

"Nobody who has not been in the interior of a family can say what the difficulties of any individual of that family may be."
— Jane Austen

BEAST FILES

Family. It is the foundation upon which society is based. In a family we all learn that we have roles, responsibilities, friendship, order and even a little chaos to shake things up from time to time. But most importantly, it is within a well-functioning family that we first learn compassion, understanding, reasoning, discipline and all of these things tempered with love. Is it any wonder that those of us who have chosen to take to our own small families of heroic groups can look upon the first family among us with such pride? That family being none other than the Fantastic Four.

It all started quite by accident. A scientist named Reed Richards was competing with the world in a race... a space race. His designs were brilliant, and all seemed well until the U.S. government threatened to cut the project's funding. Desperate to have his goals materialize, he recruited his best friend and project pilot Benjamin J. Grimm, his girlfriend Susan Storm, and her little brother Johnny. All four of them snuck into the experimental rocket and soon found themselves blasting off into the depths of space.

Shortly after their departure they passed through the Van Allen belt, and just as Grimm had earlier predicted, the spaceship was ill equipped to handle the lethal doses of cosmic radiation which penetrated the ship and their bodies. Wracked with pain, Grimm valiantly steered the craft back to Earth and into a successful landing. Upon exiting their ship, they quickly found themselves transformed into beings possessing strange and wonderful powers. Quickly they decided to use their powers for the betterment and defense of man as the Fantastic Four.

And defend they have. Over the years, few teams have handled more dire threats to both the Earth and the cosmos as the Fantastic Four. I dare say that not even the Avengers or X-Men have tackled cosmic menaces as adeptly as they. Without them, I cannot fathom where we would be. And I thank my stars and garters for them every night.

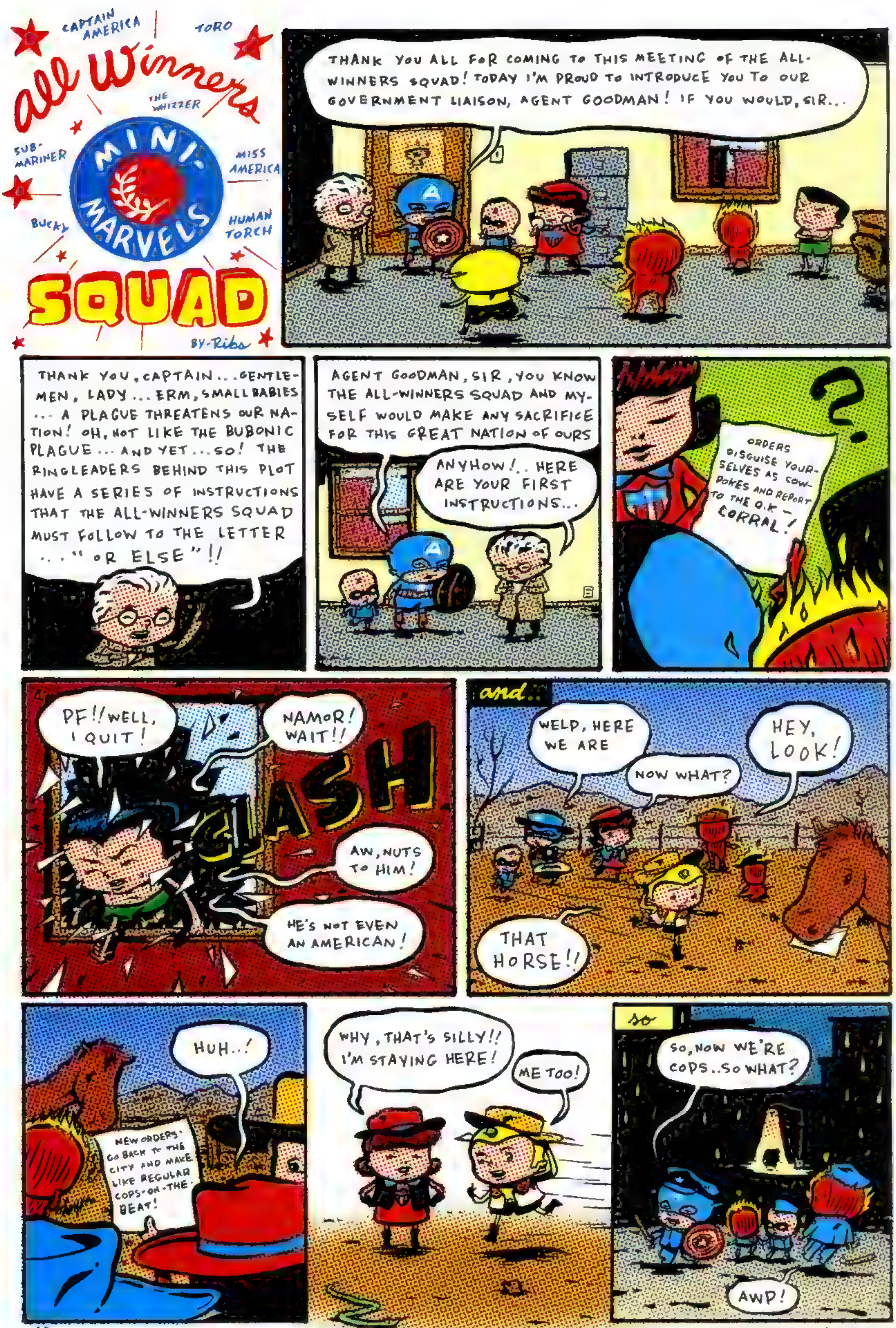
INDIVIDUAL NOTES

MISTER FANTASTIC– Reed Richards' powers are those of elasticity itself. He has complete mental control of seemingly every molecule in his body. He has been observed as being able to utilize his stretching form in a variety of both offensive and defensive manners. But what makes Richards an unbeatable foe is not quite so much the powers of his body as the powers of his mind. He is the unquestioned supreme scientific intellect on earth, his closest rival being the mind of Doctor Doom. However, not only has Reed proven himself to be a genius in practically every form of science on earth, he has shown himself to be leaps ahead of even some of the most highly advanced alien civilizations in the known universe... a feat in and of itself. To say that his chosen code-name belies a sense of arrogance would be erroneous. In fact, in my estimation, to call the man fantastic would be nothing short of modesty.

INVISIBLE WOMAN– Susan Storm-Richards' powers lie in her ability to somehow tap into an "invisible dimension" of sorts for particles which bend light. By doing so she is not only able to render herself and other people or objects invisible, she is capable of projecting one of the most powerful manifestations of pure force I have ever witnessed. Her force fields are quite extraordinary and have been capable of providing her with a stable, though crude form of flight... and some of the most powerful offensive weapons ever. Her only limits seem to be her imagination and the strain of the intense concentration required. And as she has proven time and time again, she has no shortage of that commodity.

HUMAN TORCH– Johnny Storm has grown in both power and maturity over the years. He is quite possibly the world's authority on fire and its effects. His pyrokinetic abilities prove him capable of sheathing himself in a blanket of flame. This flame provides him with a type of body armor that few projectiles can penetrate without burning up completely. Further, by projecting intense heat below him and behind him, he is capable of flying at close to supersonic speeds. He can further generate heat in the form of blasts from his hands which do considerable damage, or even weave fire constructs which he controls the shape of mentally. He has been observed as being capable of taking possession of flames not his own, and even dousing flames completely. And his most devastating ability of all is his capacity to generate what he calls a "nova" flame.

THE THING– Ben Grimm would like the world to believe him to be a stoic, brooding man who cares little for the world all around him and blames his condition on Reed. He would have the world believe that if he could have his humanity back, he would give up his grotesque form and walk away from it all. But he can't fool me. He's had his chances over the years to attain these goals. And every time he's had to make the choice, he somehow always ends up back in his current form, ever eager to take to his "clobberin' time" battle cry. For he is, no pun intended, the cornerstone of the group. While he isn't a blood relation to the rest of the team, there is no question that he is family. And with his super-human strength and the durability of his hide to stand up to the punishment of even the Hulk's mighty blows, the ever-loving blue-eyed Thing will always be a valued addition. And that's just how his Aunt Petunia would like it to be.



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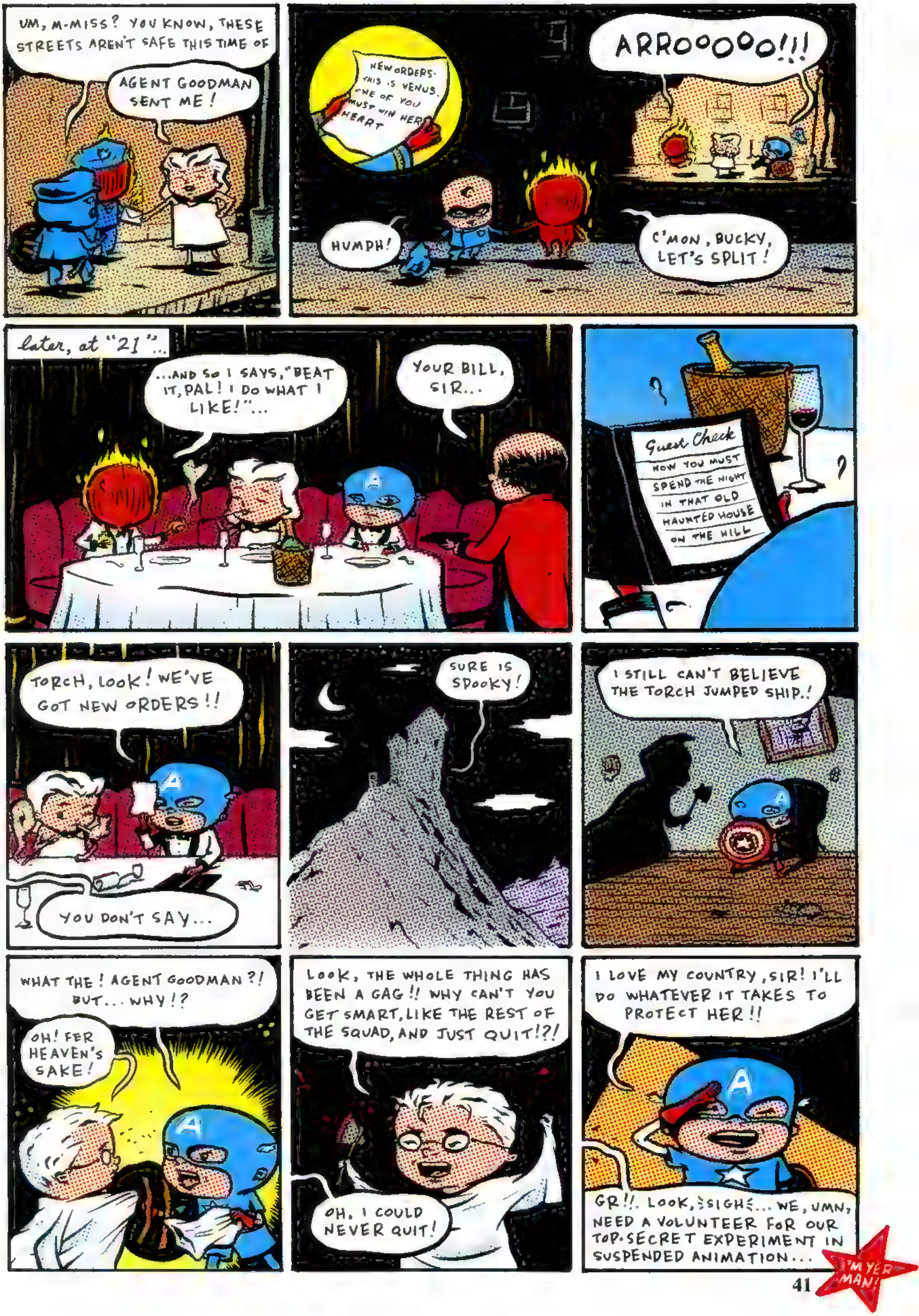

UM, M-MISS? YOU KNOW, THESE STREETS AREN'T SAFE THIS TIME OF
AGENT GOODMAN SENT ME!
NEW ORDERS: THIS IS VENUS. ONE OF YOU MUST WIN HER HEART
HUMPH!
ARROOOOOO!!!
C'MON, BUCKY, LET'S SPLIT!
later, at "21"...
...AND SO I SAYS, "BEAT IT, PAL! I DO WHAT I LIKE!"...
YOUR BILL, SIR...
Guest Check
NOW YOU MUST SPEND THE NIGHT IN THAT OLD HAUNTED HOUSE ON THE HILL
TORCH, LOOK! WE'VE GOT NEW ORDERS!!
YOU DON'T SAY...
SURE IS SPOOKY!
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE THE TORCH JUMPED SHIP.!
WHAT THE! AGENT GOODMAN?! BUT... WHY!?
OH! FER HEAVEN'S SAKE!
LOOK, THE WHOLE THING HAS BEEN A GAG!! WHY CAN'T YOU GET SMART, LIKE THE REST OF THE SQUAD, AND JUST QUIT!?!
OH, I COULD NEVER QUIT!
I LOVE MY COUNTRY, SIR! I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO PROTECT HER!!
GR!! LOOK, SIGH... WE, UMN, NEED A VOLUNTEER FOR OUR TOP-SECRET EXPERIMENT IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION...
I'M YER MAN!

BIG BREAKS

FEATURING TOMMY LEE EDWARDS

Welcome to the final segment of interviews featuring the story behind the story-tellers. Our goal is to not only give you, the fan, a sense of how your favorite creators got into the biz, but also what it takes to get in to Marvel.

This month, we're asking MOON KNIGHT and TIME SLIP's Tommy Lee Edwards how he got into the comics business.

MARVEL COMICS: First of all, let's talk about your past credits. What were they?

TOMMY LEE EDWARDS: Detective Comics, Batman Chronicles, Invisibles, Judge Dredd, Gemini Blood, Aliens, Starship Troopers, Zombie World (upcoming), MOON KNIGHT and in the next few months, a DAREDEVIL ONE-SHOT and a 48-page TIME SLIP special called SIEGE HEIL!

MC: How did you break into comics?

TE: Back when I was in junior high and high school, I totally loved the work Howard Chaykin did on American Flag, The Shadow and Blackhawk. Howard Chaykin was it in my book. I did get into X-Men and Daredevil... but I lost interest when everyone started being influenced by the artwork of Jim Lee, Todd McFarlane and Rob Liefeld. It's funny, but when everyone else was getting into comics, I was losing interest. I guess at that point, I lost interest and thought I'd never get into the comics field.

MC: What happened next?

TE: I decided that I still loved art, though, and enrolled at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California to study illustration. This moved me into doing things like story-boarding and design. Even this wasn't exactly what I wanted to be doing. I kept thinking it would be better if I were able to do more magazine illustration work. The thing is, there just isn't all that much magazine work to go around.

MC: And at this point, you still had no interest in comics?

TE: Well, no... but one day, I saw an ad for a comic convention that Howard Chaykin was going to be at... and, well, I went. And that changed everything.

I spent the afternoon talking to Howard and discussing the portfolio I was working on. He put me in touch with some people and I got my first comics job in a five-issue limited series for Milestone. My Name Is Holocaust was my first work. I think it's pretty awful now, but, it did teach me how to draw super heroes, which up until that moment, I had no interest in drawing. After this, I got work at Valiant... then DC... and that led up to MOON KNIGHT for Marvel.

MC: What about your story-boarding days? Do you miss them?

TE: I don't get a chance. I still do some work for Disney, actually.

MC: Who are your artistic influences?

TE: Before I moved to North Carolina, I shared a studio with Howard Chaykin, Mike Vosberg and Steve Mitchell. They pointed me to artists like Alex Toth and Milt Canniff and Frank Robbins. Their work made lots of sense to me. I was also introduced to Harvey Kurtzman and Austin Briggs. I learned a lot from studying their art. And, I think I learned even more from having Howard Chaykin razzing my work every day I was in the studio.

MC: What advice would you give to wannabe artists?

TE: Look at comics as little as possible. Draw from life, not from comics. If you want to draw a tree... don't look at the way Arthur Adams draws one. Look at a real tree and draw that. And learn from the great storytellers. I think Batman: Year One is probably the comic I've read the most times. I'm not saying it's the best comic in the world, but it's pretty great. And it's important to develop a team of creators you work with. My wife, Melissa, has colored my stuff for the past few years... and John Workman has lettered it. As a result, a consistency has been found. The idea of having a team you're a part of is very important. So, artists should consider how their work is going to be colored and lettered. That's key.

MC: Favorite Marvel Comic of all time?

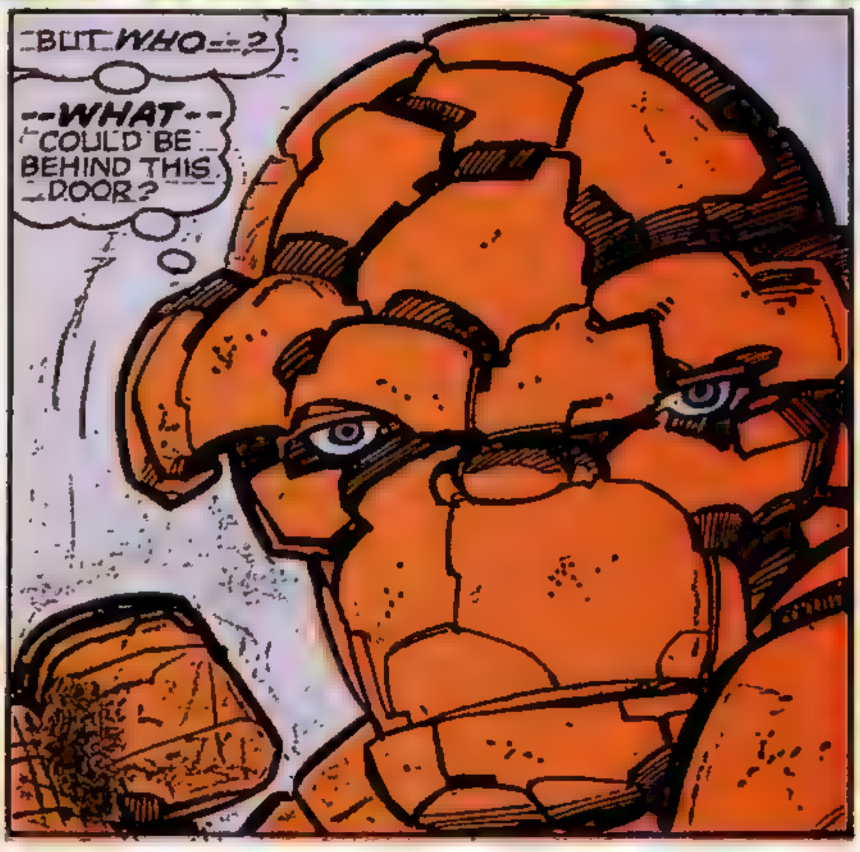
TE: Daredevil: Born Again (DD #227-233). The writing by Miller was perfect. The art by Mazzuchelli was flawless.

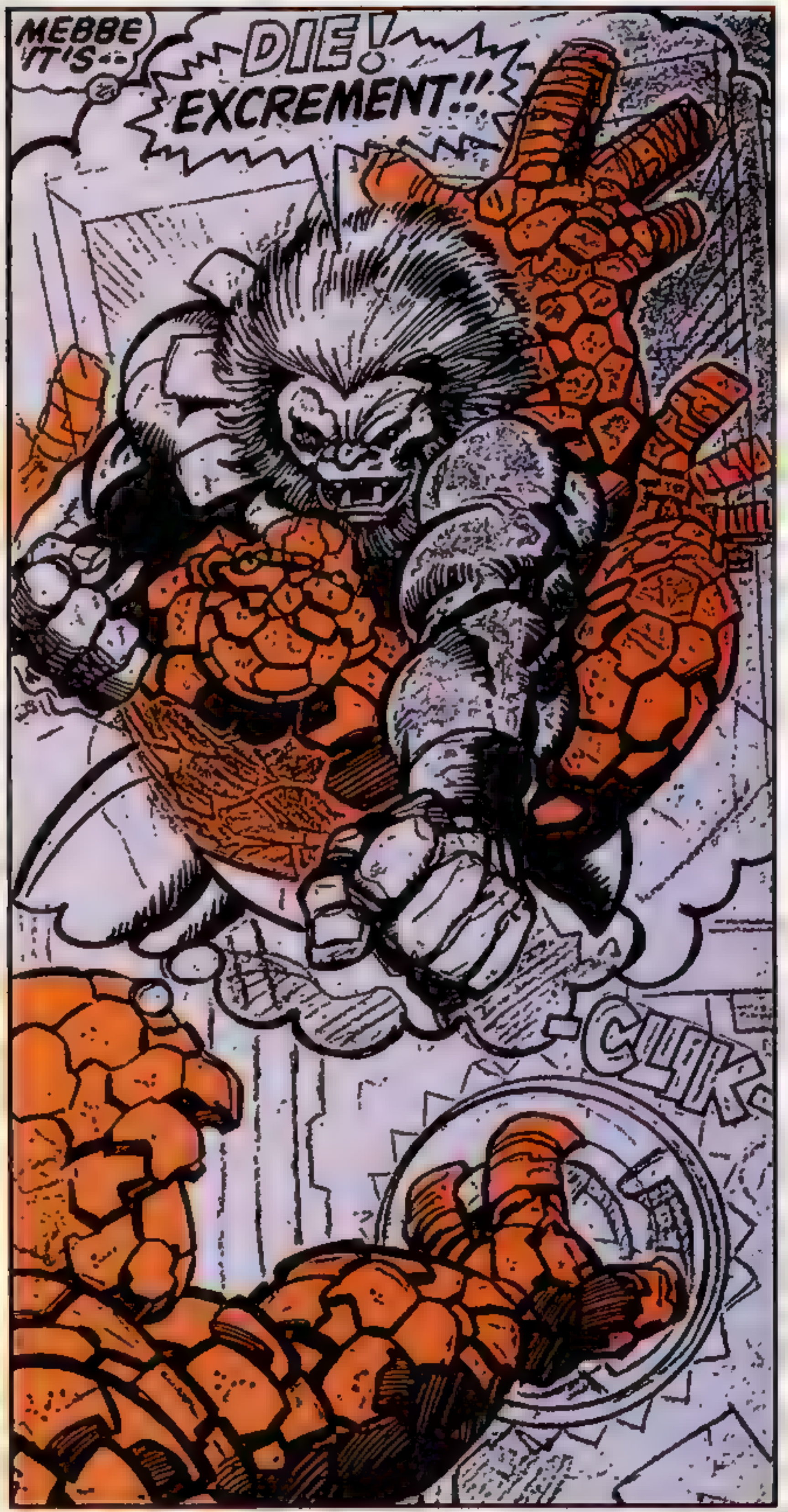
MC: Anything else?

TE: I have four cats.

—Jim Krueger

Greatest Comics Never Seen





BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH

SOMETIMES THERE ARE THINGS FOUND AMONGST THE DISCARDED BINS OF FORGOTTEN PROJECTS THAT ARE SO FANTASTIC, THAT ONCE SEEN CAN NEVER BE FORGOTTEN. AND FROM THAT MOMENT ON, EVERY DISCARDED ENVELOPE, EVERY CRUMPLED XEROX, EVERY STRAY PILE OF PAPERS MAY HOLD SECRETS TO THESE AND OTHER PROJECTS. THINGS THAT BEGIN OBSESSIONS.

THAT IS THE NATURE OF TWO BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH EPICS THAT WILL, TRAGICALLY, ONLY BE RECORDED IN THE ANNALS OF THE GREATEST COMICS NEVER SEEN.

WRITER-ARTIST BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH IS PROBABLY BEST ASSOCIATED WITH HIS WORK ON THE FIRST EPIC ISSUES OF CONAN THE BARBARIAN. BUT, HERE AT MARVEL, HIS WORK ON X-MEN, DAREDEVIL, MACHINE MAN, MARVEL FANFARE, AND OF COURSE, WEAPON X, WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN.

BEN GRIMM

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE A COPY OF MARVEL FANFARE #15, YOU ALREADY KNOW OF HOW BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH WAS BORN TO DRAW THE THING. BUT HIS WORK THERE WAS NOT TO BE THE END OF HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MOST POPULAR MEMBER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.

THE TRUTH IS, NO ONE IS QUITE SURE ANYMORE IF BEN GRIMM WAS TO BE A 4-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES OR A 2-ISSUE BOOKSHELF SERIES. WHAT WAS PIECED TOGETHER CAME FROM VARIOUS XEROXES OF TWO HALF-COMPLETED AND PARTIALLY INKED 22-PAGE ISSUES THAT ARE PURE WINDSOR-SMITH. EACH ISSUE OPENS WITH A DREAM SEQUENCE OF BEN GRIMM'S ROCKY EXTERIOR DISINTEGRATING. THE "ROCKS" ARE SIMPLY FALLING

FROM HIM, REVEALING THAT THERE IS NOTHING UNDERNEATH, LITERALLY.

AFTER WAKING FROM THIS NIGHTMARE IN ISSUE #1 (AND #2), BEN PROCEEDS TO TRY TO GATHER TOGETHER THE PIECES OF HIS LIFE WHICH DO GIVE HIM SUBSTANCE. BUT, AS THINGS PROCEED (WHICH INCLUDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HOST HIS OWN TELEVISION SHOW AND A FEARED ATTACK FROM THOSE WHO WOULD SEEK TO EXPLOIT THE THING'S RELATIONSHIP WITH BLIND SCULPTRESS ALICIA MASTERS), HIS NIGHTMARE BECOMES A REALITY.

BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH'S STORY GETS UNDER THE THING'S ROCKY EXTERIOR AND TRIES TO SHOW THE INNER NATURE OF THE THING... WHICH IS, OF COURSE, WHY THIS PROJECT WAS CALLED BEN GRIMM.

NO ONE HERE IS SURE WHY THIS PROJECT WAS NEVER COMPLETED.

THE HULK: THANKSGIVING

LIKE THE THING, THIS HULK ONE-SHOT STRIKES RIGHT AT THE HEART OF WHAT MAKES THE HULK THE HULK. IT OPENS WITH AN ATTACK FROM THE MILITARY ON THE HULK IN THE DESERT. AFTER AN AMAZING HELICOPTER BATTLE WITH OL' JADE JAWS, AN EXPERIMENTAL GAS IS TESTED ON HIM. BELIEVING THAT HE HAS AWAKENED (WE ARE NEVER SURE IF WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IS THE RESULT OF THE GAS OR SOMETHING ELSE), THE HULK COMES ACROSS A FAMILY IN THEIR HOME WHERE THE HULK APPEARS TO BE "BILLY," THE YOUNG SON OF THIS FAMILY IN THE MIDST OF CRISIS.

THE FATHER OF THIS FAMILY IS A RECENTLY RETURNED WAR HERO WHO IS ULTIMATELY REVEALED TO BE BOTH VICTOR AND VICTIM. THE STORY ALSO SPEAKS TO HOW VICTIMS BREED MORE VICTIMS... AND HOW THERE MAY NEVER TRULY BE A VICTOR IN WAR.

THERE WAS MUCH TO THIS STORY THAT WAS NOT COMPLETED. ONE KEY POINT WAS A MOMENT WHEN THE HULK HELD A TOY TANK IN HIS HAND AND CRUSHED IT ACCIDENTALLY, SUGGESTING THAT PLAYING "SOLDIERS" IS FAR DIFFERENT THAN BEING A SOLDIER... JUST AS PLAYING "FAMILY" IS FAR DIFFERENT THAN BEING A FAMILY... AND THAT PLAYING "MONSTER" IS FAR DIFFERENT THAN BEING A MONSTER.

THE CONCLUSION TO THIS STORY WAS NEVER COMPLETED, SO THERE IS NO INDICATION AS TO HOW IT WAS RESOLVED. AT THIS POINT, IT'S MERELY PART OF THE EXPANDING COLLECTION OF MASTERPIECES THAT MAKE UP THE GREATEST COMICS NEVER SEEN!

CABLE

CABLE writer Joe Casey will tell you the future isn't as clear cut and dry as some would imagine. Not for Cable and not for his storyteller. Fate sometimes intervenes and throws us for a loop. Take Casey himself.

Five months ago, no one in comics had really heard of the twenty-something Californian resident. Then when James Robinson's workload began to accumulate, he asked Casey to pitch in and help co-write CABLE. A lucky break but then Robinson decided to leave the book entirely. Fortunately, Casey had already made an impression with CABLE editor Mark Powers that paved the way.

"I was right there already, working on the book and went for it," says Casey. "Throughout that situation, I got to know Mark Powers. I assume Mark liked what I was doing because I'm still doing it. Basically James got me in but the fact that Mark and I were on the same page on what we wanted to do with the book is what really clinched it."

And Marvel was more than willing to put the hot new kid on the block through a trial by fire and see if he was up to the challenge. Shortly after landing the CABLE gig, he was asked to script issue #2 of WOLVERINE: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST in two days. That led to completing the limited series, co-plotting the upcoming ALPHA FLIGHT #10 and #11, as well as co-scripting X-MEN #73. Thankfully, so far the quick success rush hasn't gone to Casey's head.

"I'm the low man on the totem pole," he jokes. "In fact, if there is a totem pole, I think I'm still buried underneath it."

For now, "the future Joe Kelly," as one editor has referred to him, is more than happy to settle back and concentrate on making CABLE a success. Casey says in the long run, he has two goals to accomplish when it comes to Nathan Summers. And one begins with his history.

Born in the present, Cable was kidnapped by the conqueror Apocalypse and infected with a Techno-Organic Virus. Still a baby, he was sent into the future where a cure would hopefully be discovered. While growing up, Cable witnessed the horrible atrocities and destruction mankind will endure at the hands of Apocalypse. Determined to prevent this nightmare from ever happening, Cable ventured back to our present, his past, to confront Apocalypse. After leading the Six Pack, a mercenary team, for a few years he became a mentor to the New Mutants and helped train them as they shifted into X-Force mode.

Often misunderstood by society and his peers, he has been labelled a terrorist and an outsider. Yet thanks to his parents, Cyclops and Madelyne Pryor, he has inherited both telepathic and telekinetic powers, making him a formidable enemy....and a powerful ally. It is only his telekenetic powers that help keep the dreaded Techno-Organic Virus in check. So what's the problem here?

"He has a very convoluted backstory and it keeps getting added on to by different writers, and it just keeps getting more confusing," offers Casey. "Part of the thing James started was to boil Cable's whole reason for existence down to its essence. He's a man out of time fighting for a better tomorrow. The second aim is CABLE as a book. Its perception in the marketplace has been the black sheep of the X-titles. The book always seems behind the eightball because of maybe where the character came from or how he was perceived. It's a book I think people buy but they don't talk about much. It's never been a book with a lot of buzz. Hopefully, we can change that."

One other thing Casey would like to stress is his intent to shy away from the X-elements and make the title more Marvel Universe user-friendly. All the mutant aspects will be downplayed as new territories are explored.

"I want to do things in this book that people have not seen here before," says Casey. "We're not talking groundbreaking concepts in comics here but as far as this book is concerned, there will be new stuff going on."

It all begins in issue #54 with a full blown Wakanda story. At the end of issue #53, Apocalypse launched his old hideouts into outer space to blow up as a means of covering his tracks. However, Cable is trapped in one of them and barely manages to escape when it explodes. Now skyrocketing into the Earth's atmosphere as a human meteorite, he crash-lands in Wakanda in time to team up with Black Panther against the Master of Sound, Klaw. In issues #55 and #56, Casey begins setting up Cable's "new you" including a new cast of supporting characters and location. "It's Cable hanging out on his own in Hell's Kitchen," says Casey. "It's a place that he feels comfortable in because it reminds him of his hellish future."

While issue #55 may be low on action, it introduces readers to a relationship that will unfold over the next year. Cable goes into a diner to grab a bite to eat and hits it off with this waitress named Stacey. Hmmm, could she be his new amour? "She is going to be the next person who has an impact on his life," is all Casey would reveal.

Don't count his former flame Domino out yet, though, as she appears in issues #55 and #56 in what Casey terms a "crime/revenge story." Domino is attacked and while she does manage to escape, the heroine is pretty messed up. Cable, who still has feelings for her, puts aside his heroic stance and goes out to avenge her.

Filling out the non-super-powered roster will be Irene who was recently seen in the Hellfire Hunt. After what happened in issue #52, the two will clear the air on exactly what their arrangement is going to be.

"Because he left her behind in Switzerland, she wasn't able to report on his

life, which he's asked her to do," explains Casey. "It kind of ticked her off and now she'll be busting his chops more often, not letting him get away with stuff."

A familiar face thought long dead by the name of Blaquesmith will be returning to harass Cable and put him through the wringer. As the voice that keeps Cable on the right path concerning his obligations, Blaquesmith will be a constant reminder of the forthcoming battle with Apocalypse.

After that, Cable and the Marvel Universe will be affected by something that is happening in all the X-books. While Casey remained tongue-tied about the cataclysm, he did hint "this is an event that will change Cable's powers and not for the better."

That's too bad because he's really going to need them over the year. The next major story arc revolves around S.H.I.E.L.D. The covert organization has been at odds with Cable before and sees him as a terrorist, so they finally decide to bring him in. They call in a S.H.I.E.L.D. manhunter identified solely as Agent 18 for the job. He's the best of the best, the cream of the crop when it comes to agents. There's no official file on him and while his missions have always been successful, no one ever places him at the scene. Now he's been hired to take Cable in.....or take him out.

"S.H.I.E.L.D. builds their case against him; they have enough to go on but it's not only them," says Casey. "There's an anti-terrorist coalition made up of civilian lobbyists and other shady government types. Plus there's a connection to a Marvel villain in there somewhere."

Casey says he'll be portraying S.H.I.E.L.D. as an establishment so big, there are things going on in departments no one knows about. As a result, there is more corruption than people are aware of and some guys are making their own rules.

"This operation of going after Cable is the sort of thing legendary leader Nick Fury wouldn't approve of, so they just don't tell him," says Casey.

Beyond all this, there are a few major dangling plotlines Casey is moving towards clearing up. The writer will finally reveal who The Twelve are, what they represent and what their function is. In the past, it has been said they are 12 mutants who will lead mutantkind to the next phase and Cable is supposed to gather them together. The other epic battle to watch out for will be so earth-shattering, so mind-numbing, neither contender may walk away unscathed. Grab your front row seats for the slugfest of the century!

"Cable's whole reason for being here is to take on Apocalypse. Well, the final confrontation, winner takes all, will happen," promises Casey. "There will be a resolution."

Casey says with his new direction, he'll be aiming to please the two sets of people picking up the title. "For readers who have been sticking around for a long time, I'm going to resolve a lot of things they've been asking for. Then for people who read Marvel Comics but haven't read CABLE, they may want to try CABLE 'cause it's definitely going to be more accessible as a book on its own."

So strap yourself in and get ready for the thrills and chills coming up. He may be the man of tomorrow but for Cable, the future is now.

—Bryan Cairns

MARVEL AT THE MOVIES

By Pat Jankiewicz

Mighty Marvel hasn't had the best track record when it comes to big screen adaptations of our colorful characters. Many of these films haven't done us justice, either, with minuscule budgets, stupid changes or just poor planning that showed little respect for our heroes, like "Punisher," "Captain America," and let's not even mention "Howard The Duck"!

We haven't had the multi-million-dollar, star-packed epics like DC Comics has had. But then, after the rotten "Batman & Robin," they have no room to brag either! Instead, our influence has been felt in numerous films with characters referring to our books. A perfect example comes in the recent film "THE ICE STORM."

In this highly regarded drama, a troubled teen captures the disintegration of his family by relating it to FANTASTIC FOUR #141, where Reed Richards breaks up his marriage and team/family by turning his son into a vegetable. This is only one of numerous Marvel references that have been made in major motion pictures over the years. Marvelites can find solace in such films as:

"ADVENTURES IN BABYSITTING": This clever comedy features a little girl obsessed with Thor. She correctly recalls that Thor, Captain America and Daredevil live "in the city" and goes there hoping to meet him. She even wears an amazing replica of the Asgardian's winged helmet. BABYSITTING's director, the great Chris Columbus, is currently preparing big-screen adaptations of The Fantastic Four and Daredevil.

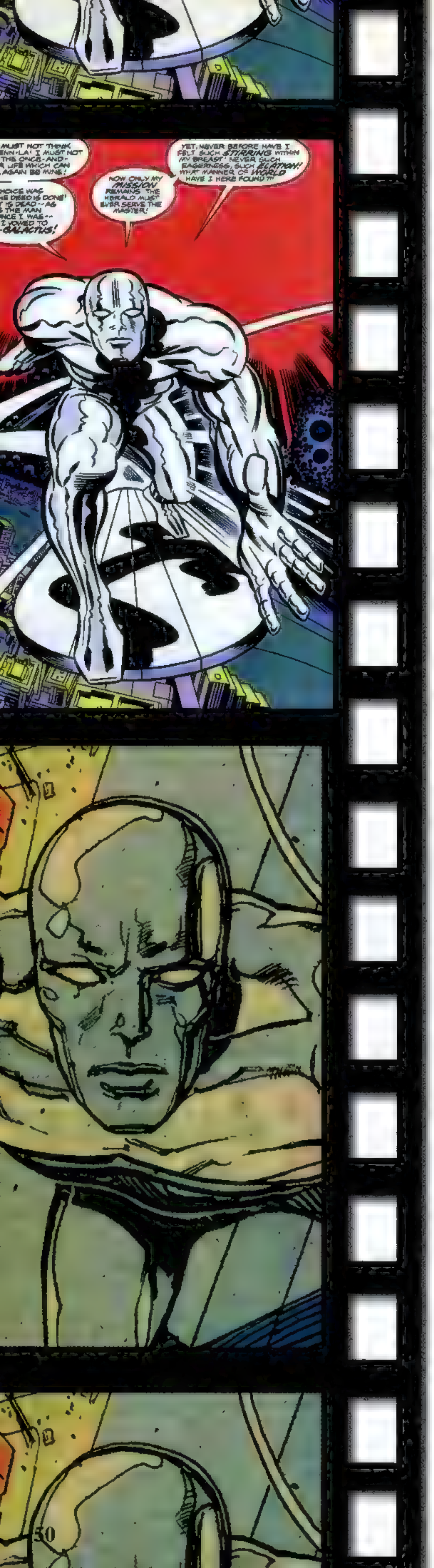
"RESERVOIR DOGS": In Quentin Tarantino's cool debut, undercover cop Tim Roth has a '60s Jack Kirby Silver Surfer poster on his wall and describes another character as "Looking like The Thing, without the rocks."

"CRIMSON TIDE": Quentin Tarantino strikes again! In an uncredited polish of the script, he adds a scene where Denzel Washington breaks up a fight. What are the two Marines fighting over? Who drew The Surfer better—Jack Kirby or Moebius! Washington proves to be the film's hero by correctly citing Kirby! Come on, Quentin—adapt a Marvel Comic...

"TRUE ROMANCE": Another gift from Quentin T. Down-on-his-luck comic shop employee Christian Slater takes beautiful call girl Patricia Arquette to his comic shop (Inflatable Spidey prominently displayed) and tells her the most romantic story he knows...From a Nick Fury comic! Like his hero Nick Fury, Slater earns an eye patch by the film's action-packed climax. Not many know that Patricia Arquette's husband, Oscar-winner (and possibly the next big screen Superman) Nicholas Cage named himself after Marvel's own Hero-For-Hire, Luke Cage!

"ROBOCOP": When a jittery punk robs a Mom & Pop grocery store, he approaches the cash register by pretending to buy a copy of WEB OF SPIDER-MAN. Unfortunately, the filmmakers incorrectly predicted that "WEB OF" would still be around in the future! RoboCop also shows strong elements of Iron Man. RoboCop designer Rob Bottin said Marvel Comics was a big influence in his design.

"INDIAN SUMMER": Bill Paxton blows off his friends in this "BIG CHILL-in a-summer camp" comedy/drama



because he "has a date with Spider-Man." He punctuates this by holding up the comic. Paxton's character also draws a Romita-styled Spider-Man on a bunkhouse wall. He threw in the "Date with Spider-Man" line as a good-natured nod to director James Cameron, who put Paxton in ALIENS, TRUE LIES and TITANIC. Cameron is slated to do the heavily anticipated SPIDEY movie. (Please, please do it, Mr. Cameron!)

"FANDANGO": In this touching coming-of-age film, look for the scene where "E.R." star (and real-life Marvel fan) Abraham Benrubi is flipping through a vintage copy of THE INCREDIBLE HULK. Wonder if it's from his personal collection? FANDANGO Director Kevin Reynolds and star Kevin Costner's later re-teamed on WATERWORLD, which recalled our own Namor the Submariner, with a half-man/half-fish hero also named "Mariner."

"EASY RIDER": In this landmark classic, Peter Fonda's easygoing biker is nicknamed "Captain America." After this film opened, Cap picked up a cycle and guitar in the comics!

"BREATHLESS": Richard Gere reading and digging the Silver Surfer? Wow! Gere reads such timeless Stan Lee Surfer prose as "Though Infinity beckons, I must leave behind my very heart...Where soars the Silver Surfer, there must he soar alone" as the camera pans lovingly over John Buscema's classic artwork.

Gere quotes the Surfer in a hepcat style that's got to be seen to be believed. When his sexy French girlfriend wonders why he's so absorbed in a comic, he explains it's "Silver Surfer, Skyrider of the Spaceways...He's a space-lost freak lookin' for love." Gere proceeds to tell her all about the Surfer and his lost love, Shalla-Bal. "They're trapped in two different galaxies;" he says sadly, "he's got to go away and never return."

Except for one scene depicting an X-MEN reader as a cruel punk, this is a mighty Marvel Movie Masterpiece! In an inspired touch, the credits are done to resemble original SILVER SURFER letterer Joe Rosen's work! Back in the late '80s, BREATHLESS director Jim McBride and screenwriter LM 'Kit' Carson did a script for an ELEKTRA movie.

"DOMINICK & EUGENE": A retarded garbage man (Tom Hulce) with a heart of gold idolizes The Hulk. He's good-natured and feels his plight in being harassed for no reason is comparable to the Green Goliath. Like The Hulk, he's misunderstood but strives to do the right thing.

"CLOCKERS": Clearly director Spike Lee and screenwriter Richard Price, both native New Yorkers, are Marvel fans. Harvey Keitel gets tough on a young punk by sneering "I can read you, man—I can read you like a Marvel Comic!"

"SLEEPERS": Hip Catholic priest Robert DeNiro gives an aspiring artist a FANTASTIC FOUR comic.

"THE PARALLAX VIEW": A cool government paranoia flick from the early '70s. Reporter Warren Beatty is brainwashed by an evil Government group to create assassins. During the brainwashing, he's repeatedly shown a picture of Thor to build up his ego.

"THE HAND": When cartoonist Michael Caine loses his hand, It tries to find him and It ain't happy! Caine draws a CONAN-type strip (The onscreen art is provided by Conan's first artist, Barry Windsor-Smith) and is humiliated by lecturing to a community college class that has barely heard of his Barbarian character and prefers Spider-Man! Oliver Stone was a Marvel fan who wrote the first draft of 1982's CONAN THE BARBARIAN. It was more in the spirit of Roy Thomas's Conan comics than the Robert E. Howard books and better than the watered-down version that hit the screen.

"KARATE KID": Right before Daniel (Ralph Macchio) gets jumped, he's in the bathroom next to a guy in a Spider-Man costume. Later, after he's given a vicious beating that stops only when someone sails through the air spinning and kicking his attackers. This leads him to one conclusion: When he awakens, he wants to know "Where'd Spider-Man go?"

"SUPERMAN: THE MOVIE": Lex Luthor's bumbling assistant Otis has a secret—he's a Marvel fan! Even though Otis works for a DC Comics super-villain, he proves he has taste...A copy of THE MIGHTY THOR is sticking prominently out of his pocket in a key scene.

"BUCKAROO BANZAI": A fictional Marvel "Buckaroo Banzai" comic is perused by a character as some gross aliens land on Earth. (Peter Weller's Banzai also seems to be a combination of Reed Richards and Doc Savage!)

"E.T.": The government eavesdrops on neighbors while searching for the little alien and overhear a kid planning to be Spider-Man for Halloween.

"POLTERGEIST": In a crucial moment in this haunted house, a toy Hulk flies by on a plastic pegasus, looks at the camera, and flies on.

"MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE": Truck-stop patrons like Emilio Estevez and (Future Commissioner Gordon) Pat Hingle are hunted by living trucks! The evil, leading 18-wheeler has the face of The Green Goblin! Writer/director Stephen King has mentioned Marvel Comics characters in several of his hit books, including THE STAND, IT and DANSE MACABRE.

"ROBOTJOX": In this future giant robot epic, a trainer bellows Ben Grimm's favorite catchphrase, "It's Clobberin' Time!" as a battle begins. The film's climax is clearly inspired by the old comics stories where American hero Iron Man fights Soviet hero Crimson Dynamo. Cool cult Director Stuart Gordon (Re-Animator) is a Marvel fan who worked on a proposed IRON MAN movie in the early '90s.

"FIRSTBORN": A cruel English teacher picks on our hero the student by mocking Spider-Man!

"MALLRATS": features a great supporting role by Stan (The Man) Lee! That pesky inflatable Spidey from TRUE ROMANCE is seen again here.

"THE TOY": This 1983 comedy features Richard Pryor in a Spider-Man costume. Spidey dolls—er, action figures, are very noticable in a toy store scene. Director Richard Donner, who did the first and best Superman movie, will be producing X-MEN with his wife Lauren Shuler Donner.

"MISSING IN ACTION": Big Chuck Norris returns to Vietnam only to get drunk watching "Spider-Man And His Amazing Friends" on TV. (It's the one where Spidey, Iceman and Firestar fight The Shocker, if it matters.) Chuck also did karate displays at a couple mid-'70s Marvel Comic conventions. MIA Director Joe Zito almost directed a Spidey feature in the mid-'80s.

"MY BLUE HEAVEN": This Steve Martin/Rick Moranis comedy has Marvel Comics all over it, including a gratuitously placed copy of A MAN CALLED NOVA in a police station squadroom.

"MR. MOM": When harried Dad (and future Batman) Michael Keaton comes down to breakfast and sees his kids watching a "Hulk" cartoon where Greenskin is battling a giant robot, he sighs in disgust: "Robots!"

"TOUCH AND GO": That darn Keaton again, this time brawling with juvenile delinquents in a comic-shop fight that rages past a Captain America standee.

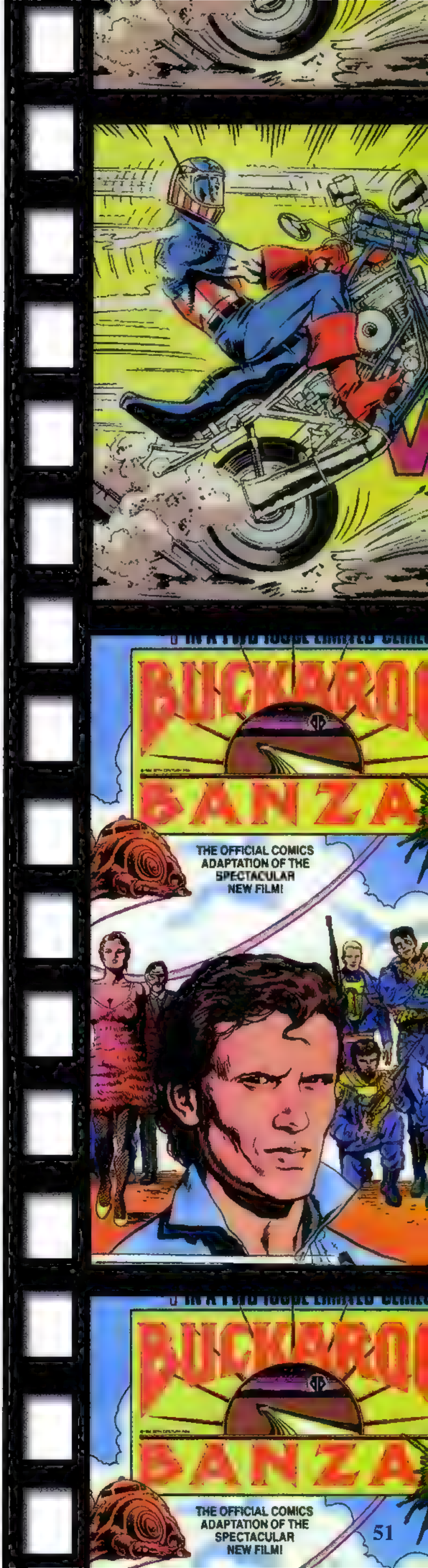
"BEATLEMANIA": In the otherwise boring adaptation of the play, pictures of Sub-Mariner and other Marvel heroes can be glimpsed during a psychdelic number.

"WINGS OVER AMERICA": In this tour documentary, real Beatle Paul McCartney performs a a song called "Magneto And The Titanium Man," about two of our favorite foes. He also mentions Iron Man's old sparring partner, The Crimson Dynamo, while the camera shows images of each. The Beatles also had their own Marvel Super Special in the late '70s.

"LAST AMERICAN VIRGIN": Here's that dilemma every Marveloid fears: What happens when you have to choose between something as warm and loving as INCREDIBLE HULK #1 or buying jewelry for something as transitory as a girlfriend. Needless to say, the Last American Virgin of the title makes the wrong decision!

"LEAVING NORMAL": A crucial scene occurs in a kid's room in front of a "Marvel Universe" poster. The film's writer, the extraordinary Ed Solomon, wrote Marvel's MEN IN BLACK and is now scripting the big-screen adaptation of X-MEN.

'Til next time, True Believers, save us the aisle seat!



A Conversation With... Mark Waid

In thirty years or so when we look back on comics history there're a few writers who will have their stories respected for what they are...well written, pivotal, ground-breaking classics. Mark Waid will definitely be one of those names on that short list. Mark's previous and current work on Captain America has redefined the character as a true American icon. Recently, Marvel VISION reporter-at-large Dean Davis spoke with him about his ideals of the noble hero, his writing style, and his efforts on throwing a vibranium shield with pinpoint accuracy.

Dean: Here's an easy one. How did you become interested in comics?

Mark: It was really the 1960's Batman TV show that got me interested. I was three years old. I really don't remember a lot about it, but I do know that it had an effect on me. My father also brought home Batman comic books because of my love for the TV show and I never stopped reading comics, not even after I discovered girls.

Dean: What was it about these stories that got you hooked?

Mark: It was the nobility of the characters. Here are guys who put their life on the line to do the right thing because it's the right thing to do. That always appealed to me.

Dean: Maybe it's just me, but when you say "noble" I think of a knight on a white horse. There are some characters who seem "dark" in their sense of nobility. It works for some heroes while it's a joke for others.

Mark: You're right. They don't all have to be shiny and bright. Guys like Punisher and Wolverine shouldn't change. What I want is for the characters to be true to themselves and to how they were envisioned when they were originally created. Brighter characters shouldn't be morphing into some sort of stupid "grim and gritty" identity just to follow a trend set in motion ten years ago with 'Dark Knight'.

To me, Captain America cannot work in any other environment other than a bright, shiny, happy, inspirational tone. That's the same with Superman and a lot of characters. Guys like Wolverine and Batman deserve to be a little darker, but not hideously so. Even the Punisher has a weird sense of nobility. I don't salute it, but it's there.

Dean: The characters you're mainly known for seem to survive best in the bright and happy tone that you just spoke of. Did you find that this style was well received when you started writing?

Mark: No, and actually I had to sneak it in...(both laugh) I absolutely had to come in under the radar. I started this direction in about 1989 or '90 and we were only a few years

into the era of the Watchmen and Dark Knight type hero. I do like both those series, don't get me wrong. They were grim, realistic, magnificent pieces of work in their approach. Frank Miller and Alan Moore knew what they were doing...that stuff was original. The problem is that so many creators came after them following that vision instead of creating their own...they just imitated the style. There was an integrity to Moore and Miller's work that isn't in the work of most people who came after them. Those who followed were just doing "grim and gritty" because it sold.

With Flash I chose to do my thing and not pay attention to the dark stuff that was going on around me. I got flak up and down the halls of DC comics. I had one editor tell me point blank, "I don't know why we even publish your book." Luckily the sales started to rise and people started to pay attention...I knew then that we were on to something."

Certainly Kurt Busiek and Grant Morrison, among others, are all influential to this wave right now. It's not simply a matter of having smiling super heroes. It's a matter of returning some integrity to comic characters. Long answer, but there you go.

Dean: How did you finally break into the business?
Mark: I did a bit of freelance in the early '80s, nothing to speak of...a couple of Superman stories. I went on staff as a DC editor in 1987. I was editing Grant Morrison on DOOM PATROL. I was also working on SECRET ORIGINS as well LEGION of SUPERHEROES, and the first Elseworlds project, Gotham by Gaslight. The great thing about the job was that I was able to make contacts while at the same time learning what a good story really was by working with a multitude of writers. Frankly "Editor" was the job I always wanted...I never really set out to be a writer, I wanted to be an editor.

Dean: You did change your mind on becoming a freelance writer though.
Mark: Yeah, that was in early 1990. I left staff at DC, but didn't have much going on there, so I went to Archie Comics as a freelance editor. Slowly the writing started to catch on. Brian Augustyn, who was an editor at DC, was the only guy there who would hire me. Everybody else thought that I was an old fanboy who would tell old-fashioned stories that nobody would read. I've said many times that I owe my career to Brian. I did Impact Comics for DC and then the FLASH after that.

Dean: Let's talk about your writing on CAPTAIN AMERICA. Is that a job you sent in submissions for or did Marvel pursue you?
Mark: Ralph Macchio called me out of the blue. I had done a little bit of work for Marvel...DEADPOOL and some X-MEN work. I had always wanted to do Captain America, he's my favorite Marvel character. Next to Superman he's one of my all-time favorites.

We all knew that Mark Gruenwald had no real intention of leaving the book, so when Ralph called I had no assumption that it was about Cap, but I was hoping for it. Much to my stunned surprise that's what he offered me and it worked out great.

I really wanted to revamp Cap a bit. Mark Gruenwald did a spectacular job with him, and I say this with no disrespect, but he wrote more from the head whereas I write more from the heart...that was the difference in our approach. I wanted stories that were a little more sleeker and simpler—James Bond crossed with John LeCarre...spine-tingling, cliffhanger-type stories. Not to knock what Mark did, though...he was very helpful in making the transition smooth.

Dean: What's in Captain America's future?
Mark: By the time this sees print we should be done with our three-parter, "Power and Glory." This is the story arc where Cap once and for all decides that his future is not sitting around waiting for Modok and the Serpent Society to attack. He now feels it's his job to make America a better place; although he promises to do this, he admits freely that he doesn't know quite what "a better place" means.... We keep saying that Captain America stands for the American way and the American dream, but what does that mean? I'm not sure, but my attitude is, let's have Cap and the readers—and me—figure it out together.

Dean: Would you like to see a sidekick in Cap's life?
Mark: Actually...yeah, I would. I found out much to my surprise while writing CAPTAIN AMERICA #1 that it is impossible for me to write a story showing him risking his life with daring stunts without someone nearby to scream, "Are you nuts?" I'll probably spend more time having Sharon around in the future...I feel she's already a sidekick to him, and her cynicism plays so well off his idealism.

Dean: What type of political leanings would Captain America have?
Mark: Now this is all strictly my interpretation of him, but I see Cap as a liberal. He grew up a Roosevelt era Democrat. He's very much a student of the Constitution, but realizes it for what it is—a set of guidelines that were made up by some great men many years ago who didn't face the obstacles that we do today, and that's something that must be considered when interpreting the Bill of Rights. When Thomas Jefferson and Ben Franklin roughed out the rules on gun control, they lived in a world without automatic weapons.

Dean: Many comic book fans would like to see the industry go back to the readers. Provide good, solid stories and art while worrying less about the packaging for the collector market. Is this a trend you see happening now?
Mark: I certainly see Marvel doing it...to a lesser extent DC is doing it also. I don't see a lot of the other younger companies following this path though. They seem to be satisfied with making money on comics that have no story to them and they see no reason to change that.

There are artists who are consummate storytellers like Ron Garney, Andy and Adam Kubert, Mike Wieringo, and others. Sadly, for every one of them there's ten guys who learned to draw by swiping from Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld comics...they can't tell a story. A series of unconnected pin-up shots is not a story. "Artists" who produce those might as well be drawing postcards...their comics hang together about as well.

Dean: Well, you've surely proven yourself to the industry as a writer who knows what the readers want. Because of this unique talent you now find yourself working again in an editorial position, but this time it's at Marvel. What can you tell us about this new endeavor?
Mark: Right know I'm working as a Consulting Editor. We're still trying to define what that really means. With thirteen years experience on both sides of the desk it's a matter of me going in and lending my assistance to some of the Associate and Assistant Editors who are new at the job. I see this as a give-and-take situation, since I hope to learn some things from them, as well.

This all came about because Bob Harras called me and said, "Look, you probably won't be interested in coming back to editorial, but I thought I'd ask anyway." He was ready to hang up and I was like, "Whoa, hold up...I'd love to come back as an editor in some capacity!" Frankly I can foresee a day, not this year or next year, but sometime in the next few years when writing takes a backseat for me and my duties are far more editorial.

Dean: Mark, good luck with your new editorial gig. I also want to pass along best wishes on helping Captain America pursue the American Dream.
Mark: Hey, thanks. Once we find it, we'll be sure to let everyone know.

—DEAN DAVIS

The Skull and the Six-Gun

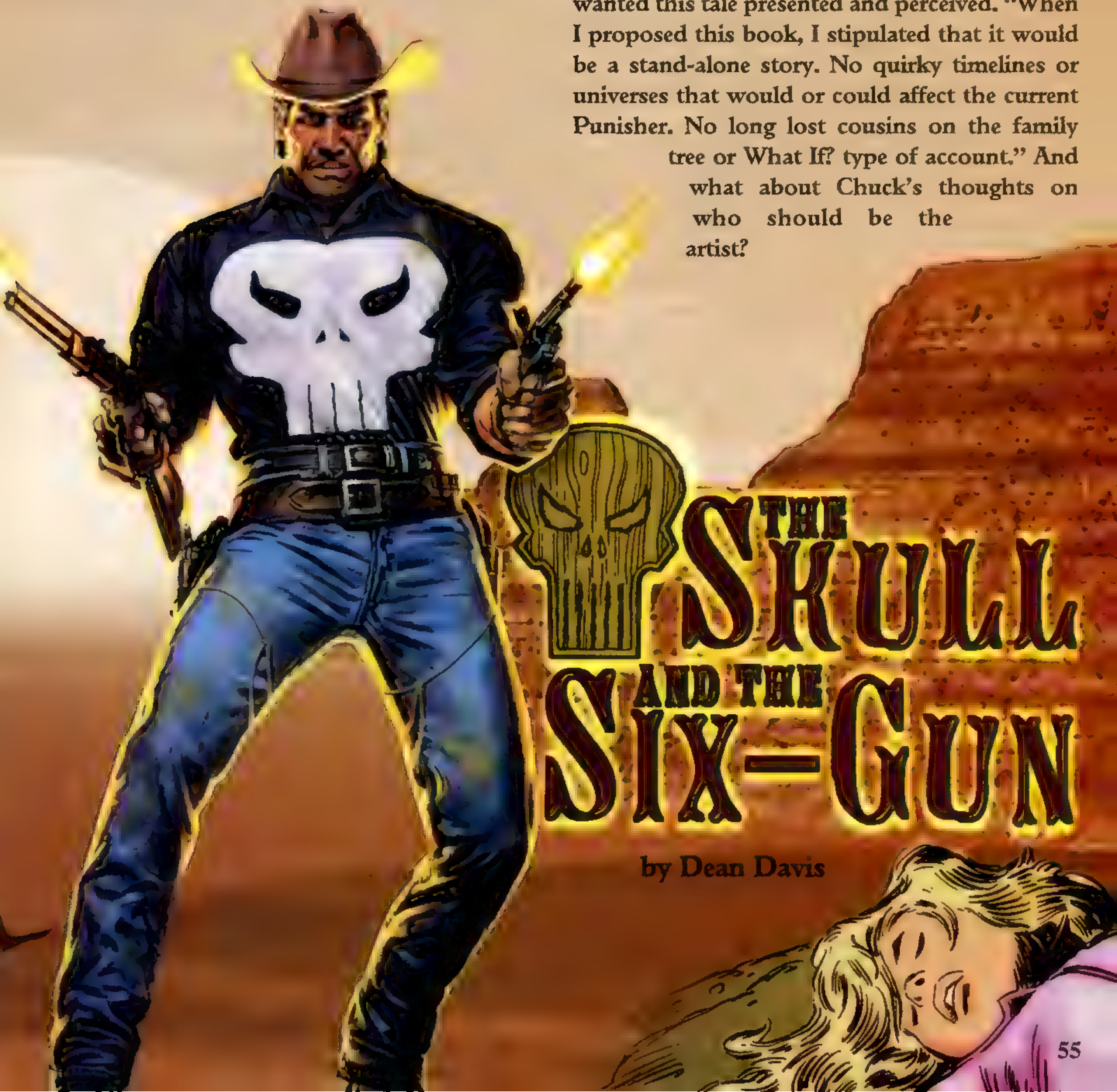
by Dean Davis

Okay, let's play a quick game of "Whose Origin is This?" A gentleman with a prestigious military career decides to settle down with a beautiful wife and raise two children. His dreams are soon destroyed when his family is killed by a group of men on the wrong side of the law. The man in question leaves his farm and uses his military and weapons knowledge to exact his revenge on the scum who shattered his life. Who is it?

If you said the Punisher, you're correct. If you said the Punisher as a settler on the western frontier in the year 1910, give yourself the bonus points and do your favorite end zone dance. For those who are a little confused, the key clue was: "leaves his farm."

In the Punisher one-shot "A MAN NAMED FRANK" we see the life of Frank Castle viewed from a different angle. It's played out just after the turn of this century on the left side of the Mississippi, namely the New Mexico territory. This tale was told by ace scribe Chuck Dixon with pencils and inks handled by the master, John Buscema; lettering is by Jim Novak while Christie Scheele aptly uses "warm colors" to create the mood and feel of the Old West. The gorgeous Bob Larkin cover is sure to grab your attention. "A MAN NAMED FRANK" was published in 1994 when the Punisher was (excuse the blatant fanboy term) still a "hot" character.

"This story is pretty much a straightforward western," says writer Chuck Dixon. "The main difference was that Frank had a huge skull on his shirt." Chuck was also clear on how he wanted this tale presented and perceived. "When I proposed this book, I stipulated that it would be a stand-alone story. No quirky timelines or universes that would or could affect the current Punisher. No long lost cousins on the family tree or What If? type of account." And what about Chuck's thoughts on who should be the artist?



"John and I collaborated together previously on a western piece for SAVAGE TALES. He was my first choice for this and I wanted him from the get-go."

The story starts out two days before Christmas in 1910. It turns out to be the most horrible moment of Frank Castle's life. We see him badly beaten and tied crucifixion style to a large wagon wheel. He stares at three of the four men who have raided his home. A few feet away his son and daughter lie dead. The only sound he hears is the screams of his wife who has been taken into the house by the leader of the mysterious riders. Suddenly the screams stop and the man emerges wearing a necklace that Frank gave to his wife. We find out that the band of thieves is there for no other reason than to steal some quick cash from Castle and his family. Fighting through the pain, Frank puts all the misery in the back of his mind and concentrates on memorizing each bandit's face. He knows that one day he will see those faces again. The leader has his hat pulled down low so we can't see his face, but Chuck foreshadows that the man can be identified as long as he wears the necklace.

When their search for any gold or money comes up fruitless, the riders leave Frank alive and tied to the wheel. As the leader with the big hat says, "See the hate in his eyes? Let that eat at his guts. Leave him out here with his kin for the bugs and buzzards. That's worse'n anything we could do to 'im." After the four depart, Frank's determination allows him to rise to his feet and begin walking to the next farm twenty miles away. The desert sun is brutal on the injured man and he ends up eating sand after a few miles. A priest and two nuns traveling by wagon see the fallen hero and come to his aid. They find shelter in a small cave and begin to nurse Frank's wounds. While speaking to the padre about what happened, Castle notices some Indian paintings on the wall. The figure that catches his eye is a warrior who wears a skull mask. The padre and Frank soon return to the farm to bury his family and retrieve a small chest of gold coins that was buried in a stone wall.

We then fast-forward one month as Frank walks into a saloon to meet up with an old friend named Gus. We learn that Frank and Gus served under the leadership of Colonel Teddy Roosevelt at the Battle of San Juan Hill. It's mentioned that Frank got the "double eagle" coins from Roosevelt himself. Ol' Gus now makes his living as an arms dealer; he brings Frank out to a shed in the back which is chock full of shootin' goodies.

We then leap to March of the next year as Frank rides through Colorado to follow up on a lead. The tip was that one of the men he sought was named Billy Simms. The trail started in Taos, then led to Pueblo, and finally to Denver. He finds Simms in a boarding house and guns down the killer along with nine of his friends. After the gunfight Frank is confronted by the sheriff. We learn that the Frank Castle of the early 1900's didn't take the law into his own hands like the modern Frank Castle, but instead honored it as his career. He hands over papers to the sheriff proving that he is a legitimate bounty hunter.

Some of you might be wondering why it took Frank more than a year just to find one guy. Well, that was the lonely life of the bounty hunter back in the frontier days. A lawman would only have the name of his prey on a warrant. If the outlaw was big time, there might be a wanted poster with a drawing or crude photo to go by. You would basically ride from town to town and gather information through word of mouth. Nowadays you can type in the wanted man's name on a computer and probably find out his favorite color faster than it takes you to finish reading this sentence. The hard part still is bringing them in cooperatively.

Even though modern conveniences like the automobile, airplane, and telephone were around at the time "A MAN NAMED FRANK" took place, very few of them made it out that far in the territories before the 1920s. If you weren't riding the train you had a horse. Guessing that the average speed of a walking horse is about three miles an hour, you could see how long it would take a bounty hunter to track down a varmint.

One form of updated technology that did make its way to the open plains was weaponry and firearms. Two things Frank managed to purchase from Gus were a Lewis machine gun and a Colt .45 M1911 handgun. The Lewis would soon become popular in WWI both on the ground and in the air. The Colt M1911 is one of the most famous firearms in history. Chuck Dixon notes, "There were a lot of advancements in weapons at that time and it allowed us to stay true to the fact of Frank's character as a top notch, cutting edge vigilante. There was also the hope that the weapons from this era would make it a little more appealing to readers who never read a cowboy story before."

Since we feel "A MAN NAMED FRANK" is a definite must read for any bona- fide comic fan, we won't reveal the ending. We can tell you that the story is historically accurate and action-packed from page one, two of Chuck Dixon's standard traits. The plots and subplots provide many surprises, so enjoy the ride. You should be able to find this book easily at most comic shops or conventions. "There was a sequel in the works where Frank meets Pancho Villa and a young George Patton," explains Chuck. "Russ Heath was doing the art but unfortunately it never got finished and remains an unpublished saga."

- Dean Davis (who watches way too many Clint Eastwood cowboy movies)

Checking Into...

THE ART ASYLUM

The toy industry is going crazy. And heading up the wave of madness is The Art Asylum. Owned and operated by a guy named Digger, it ain't no place for the faint of heart. But this is one Marvel VISION reporter who knows no fear when it comes to . . . toys and things. So after careful training, a few grueling hours of preparation, and a very deep breath, I knew what needed to be done. And within a split second there was no turning back . . . the number had been dialed!

Turns out there was no need for alarm. But the phone bill ***was insane!!!***

ROBERT: What exactly does The Art Asylum do?

DIGGER: The majority of the time we handle the whole process of creating an action figure right up to the point where it goes to Hong Kong for mass production. I won't bore you with the technical details but basically it begins with a call from the product manager (at Toy Biz). Then we go out and source the reference. After that, we'll do rough drawings and control art—or three views of the character. As well as the look of the costume, the character is also broken down into mass at this stage. That's where we decide where the articulations are going to be as well as all the measurements. If you don't do your math right and understand the character it's going to look awkward. Then it's up to me to sculpt the character. Despite the people we have here I still do 90% of the sculpting. Finally, we mold the figure. I usually kick out a set of waxes so I can refine the details. From there, we mold again and then go to hard plastic. If that's approved, it goes to get painted by the paint master department.

Tell me about creating Art Asylum? Where did you learn what you needed to know?

I learned about comic book art at the School of Visual Arts but I learned how to design action figures at the School of Hard Knocks. The School of Visual Arts is a great school but there was no department for what we do at Art Asylum. I had the privilege of studying under people like Will Eisner, Joe Orlando, and Andre LeBlanc there. But the truth of the matter was that I was the worst student on the face of the earth. I was very dissatisfied with the fact that I couldn't find what I wanted to do there. I wasn't really into it; I'd jump between illustration, film, and sequential art incessantly.

Then, in my last year, I found this three-dimensional design class and just started sculpting. I did a lot of special effects work for that class which led to other things like an exhibition for the Whitney Museum of American Art. Unfortunately, none of that was paying the rent. Finally, I had endeavored with Andrew LeBlanc to put a team together and build these giant mechanical bears. We all learned a lot from that project. Personally, that's how I learned how to manage a team effectively and where I grew to have a running knowledge of a lot of the materials we work with now. After that, I did some independent film work mostly for credit and all the coffee I could drink; no money. It was a tough road but I just loved the work.

All the while, I knew I wanted to get into the science fiction and comics industry but that's a very tight-knit circle. Finally, after working on a "Tales From The Crypt" line of figures that never came out, I managed to get an interview at Toy Biz. I didn't know what to expect because when I came into the room for the interview there were 10 people and then I was standing there all alone. It went that fast. Luckily, after 6 months they did finally call me to do a tryout for Lasher from the "Venom" series. The response I got from that was so good that I got more work. So I began calling in artists I knew to help. Before I knew it, I had a small army behind me.

What separates Art Asylum from the other guys?

We have a dynamic that doesn't exist in many other companies. All the people here are very talented and have been or are in the comics industry. I think that really puts us over the top.

What Marvel figures has Art Asylum worked on?

"Spiderman Web Traps," Smart Hulk, Apocalypse from the "Onslaught" line, the entire Venom line, Swarm and Tarantula from "Spider-Force," the new Thor and new "Avengers" line and the Spider-Man model. We also sculpted the Cyclops for the "Classic X-Men" set, the Storm head for the dress-up doll, and countless other odds and ends like heads and hands for other lines.

How much creative freedom do you have with design?

Because we do everything here including the control art, I can pretty much baby the work all the way from the fetal stage. But I couldn't give Storm three heads if I so desired. The product managers at Toy Biz run the show, really. How much we can do with an action figure really depends on how much articulation we're allowed or what pose we're trying to get him/her in. But I don't think we've ever been at odds about anything that was a priority with a character.

What happens to the original sculptures when their purpose is served?

Because I use wax, my originals get destroyed. But I keep the molds in case we need more. There's really no other choice because we have to do things so quickly.

What's your typical day like?

I get into the office around 10 am. From that time right through until 5 pm I'm doing everything from doing business on the phone to directing everyone. At around 6 pm I really start to be an artist and get right into sculpting. That lasts until at least 1 am. That's 7 days a week. Pretty much everyone here is on that same schedule. We all love what we're doing. That's not to say that it's always a pleasure, some days it's tough. But overall, it's a very passionate atmosphere.

How long does it take for a figure to pass through your offices and emerge complete?

If we have five figures and they all came in the door at the same time, we'd want about a month and a half to two months to get them out of here.

How do you feel about not being credited on the merchandise you create?

It sucks! It sucks! It sucks! And I think that if the industry is going to blossom, credit will eventually have to be given.

Toys are such a collectible commodity these days; do you think that fact has overshadowed their fun aspect?

There are two sides to that story. On the one side, companies want to satisfy the collectors. But on the other side, kids are really the bulk of the buying audience. Either way, people are starved for this stuff. Unfortunately, when you pick up most toy guides, they're all about how much the action figures are worth. I think it's petty for people to debate whether or not an action figure that came out six months ago is worth eight dollars or nine dollars. Who cares? The issue should really be how it was sculpted. Also, if collectors are going to leave the figures in their packaging that's cool, but only if the packaging is killer and works visually with the quality art and design. You shouldn't be keeping it in the packaging because it's going to be worth another dollar.

What, by your standards, is the most important aspect of an action figure?

It's a combination of design and sculpting. A really good sculpture on a bad design would probably be acceptable because you could look at it and say it's sculpted nicely. But, if it's designed badly, there really is only so much you can do with it so it doesn't reach its full potential.

One of your most popular figures to date is the Web Traps Spider-Man. Did you know it was going to be a winner right from the start?

That figure was the first time where they just told me to "do whatever you want, we trust you." That was license to take this character that I love more than any other in the history of the Marvel Universe and do my thing. Originally, he was supposed to have a mechanism that made him jump like the Beast figure. That's why if you look at his feet they're a little oversized. That mechanism was eventually taken out which left us free to do a straight-up pose. I wanted to do something different so I didn't do the usual one-open-hand-and-one-fist pose. I really wanted to catch that in between moment in time where he's getting ready to do something but not quite doing it yet. If you look at his fingers they're going for the web shooters but they're not quite there. I knew when we finished it, it was good. But there's so much Spidery stuff on the market, I really didn't know if it was going to provoke a reaction.

What memories do you have of buying action figures as a kid?

When I was a kid I felt I was cheated. What I saw in the comics and what I saw on the screen was never what I saw in that package on the shelf. Not even close, brother. I was always incredibly disappointed as far as action figures went. I think there's an echo out there that says kids don't really know the difference. I think that's a pack of lies. Kids are far more intelligent than they're given credit for.

What cool new figures can fans look forward to getting their hands on in '98?

There's a Typhoid Mary on the way that's really cool with the new costume. Also a Nightcrawler. It wasn't an issue of sculpting a better Nightcrawler because the last one came out so good. So we've got him so you can pose him and get his hand to the ground. He's articulated in the hips, knees and ankles so he'll drop down into a pose that's very much the way you see him in the comics.

Where do you hope Art Asylum will be 10 years from now?

First off, I'd like to say that I'm sure I'll be dead in 10 years because no one moving at this speed can live another decade. But when I'm gone, Art Asylum will be an entertainment company developing its own properties from scratch and seeing them go to market. And that includes film. We're already developing a host of characters for at least three definitive properties that I hope will be getting exposure by the new millennium.

Art Asylum Incoming

"The people that work here are far more than artists, they're warriors."

—Digger

MANNY JESUS - digital imaging and paint mastering
ULYSSES WONG - prototyping and mechanics
M'SHINO KUUMBA - control art, story & concept boards
CAESAR - control art, story & concept boards
NELSON ASENCIO - control art, story & concept boards
DONNA SOLDANO - controller & everything else

MANNY JESUS:

What He Does: I run the paint and computer departments. Basically what I try to do is enhance the look of what Digger works on and bring it to another level. We try and render things to the level you might see in the movies. When these prototypes are being made we treat them as fully finished pieces of art.

Secret to His Success: Once you get past certain techniques, it just becomes a matter of time. You wind up adding more to a piece and it grows. But I have to draw the line somewhere. If time is a consideration, I concentrate on the head, hands, feet, and certain details in the costume.

ULYSSES WONG:

What He Does: Where Digger's department is basically the organics, I do all the technical stuff. For instance, I do all the articulations for our prototypes. Things like elbows, knees, whatever. I also pretty much take care of anything Digger wouldn't actually sculpt like accessories. Luckily, most accessories are already set up but if there's a need for a prototype where something has to work, then it's up to me. They tell me what action they want and I have to make it fit.

How He Comes Up With All Those Crazy Gadgets: I look at the figure until I get really sick of it. Then, when I really start concentrating on it, I'll usually get some inspiration on how to approach the problem. If I get really stuck, I go into engineering manuals and try to look for similar mechanisms and adapt them for what we need.

—Robert Piotrowski

A Truly Talented TRIO

When talking with comic book fans (who claim to be Marvel Zombies) there're two questions that are almost always guaranteed to be answered with a blank stare. These brain busters are, "Who has stronger glue, Paste Pot Pete or the Trapster?" and, "What evolutionary path would comics have taken if Joe Maneely hadn't died at such a young age?" The first one is a trick question. Paste Pot and Trappy are the same guy...ergo, same guy, same glue. The second question really doesn't have a concrete answer, we just wanted to see how many people know the name Joe Maneely. Unfortunately, not many.

As many of our old history teachers would say, "To fully appreciate the present and help shape the future, you must first understand the past." This quote fits great with comic books. There's some very talented people from years ago that have influenced many of today's top creators. You're going to learn about three of these greats right now. They are: Bill Everett, Reed Crandall, and Joe Maneely.

"Fast" Was His Middle Name

One thing could always be said about Joe Maneely...he was fast. That didn't mean that his pages looked rushed, quite the contrary. Gene Colan worked with Joe in the early Bullpen days around 1947-48. He recalls, "Joe was great with detail. For instance, if he was drawing a Mexican bandito, the sombrero and gun holster would be ornately decorated. It would look like he labored for hours over it when it really only took him a few minutes."

Joe was incredibly versatile in his work. He could do everything from comedy to horror. Most fans that are aware of Joe's art, and his place in Marvel history, always seem to mention his work on the western comics. He also co-created the Black Knight with Stan Lee in the mid-fifties. Anything that had an historical theme to it was Joe's favorite kind of assignment.

He was Stan's right-hand man and was always there to help out the new guys. Just ask then-rookie John Romita, Sr.: "Joe Maneely was the first guy Stan asked me to talk to when I started at Marvel in the early fifties. I feel he was probably the most versatile artist in the business. He was tremendously good because his storytelling was always clear. Compared to some of today's artists he might be viewed as a bit static, but for that time he was the one to watch."

And watch they did. Art Director Syd Shores had many of the other freelancers and staffers observe Joe at work. If they couldn't match his speed, maybe they could pick up a few inking tips and tricks. I say inking because Joe never held a pencil in his hand for too long. "He had a facility of working strictly with the pen," says Gene Colan; "I don't believe he ever really bothered to pencil very much on a page. He'd jump right in with a pen or brush and put everything into a panel except the kitchen sink." John Romita agrees with Colan: "Joe was very convincing and authentic with his stuff. If he did a war story, you believed it...he could make you feel it."

In 1958 Joe's life was tragically cut short at the age of 32. He fell between two moving

commuter train cars as he tried to walk from one to the other. While researching Joe Maneely very little was found in the way of facts or anecdotes about his life...and that's a real shame. The comic book industry lost one of its greatest talents before it ever really got to know him and see his full potential.

John Romita, Sr. decided to take a stab at a question pertaining to the history of comics if Joe had lived longer. He said respectfully, "One thing I always joked about was that if he didn't die at such an early age, probably half of us wouldn't have found work at Marvel. He would have done all the books."

An Anatomical Master

Reed Crandall was born in February of 1917. From a very early age his artistic talent began to flourish. In 1935 Reed received his degree on a scholarship from the Cleveland School of Art. He soon made his way to the bright lights of New York City where he had an incredibly brief career as a children's book illustrator. He only completed one cover before he decided to seek other employment.

Eventually he made his way to the Eisner-Iger studio. It was there that he shared floor space with such legends as Will Eisner and Lou Fine. After making an impression, Reed was hired exclusively by Quality Comics to draw such books as the Blackhawks and Dollman. When World War II broke out and duty called, Reed did his part in the Army Air Force, serving for a couple of years. He went back to Quality after his stint and stayed with them until the early fifties.

Even though he occasionally did work for other companies, EC Comics started giving Reed regular gigs. He was part of one of the greatest team of artists ever assembled under one roof. When your fellow employees happen to be Al Williamson, George Evans, Wally Wood, and Jack Davis...you know you're in the major leagues. His pirate and horror covers screamed with stark realism and sheer terror.

Reed's strongest asset was his ability to draw the human figure like no one else. His good friend Al Williamson can attest to this: "Reed and Lou Fine were two of the best guys in the business as far as drawing anatomy." Even today you can find some artists who have been inspired by his technique. His inking was another of his strong points and even shows a few hints of influence from Victorian illustrator Charles Dana Gibson. In the Golden Age of comics it was pretty much the norm for an artist to ink his own work.

During the fifties Reed felt the crunch on the availability of jobs in comics like so many others. He did a fair amount of work for Buster Brown Shoes who would publish giveaway comics to promote their products and stores. One of the more noteworthy tales in this series was entitled The Interplanetary Police vs. the Space Siren.

Another interesting series of comics that was out of the mainstream and featured Reed's art was TREASURE CHEST. Billed as educational, these books were published by the Catholic Guild.

But to Reed, all of the Commies and zombies he drew were just part of doing the job he loved. Al Williamson remembers fondly the time they shared a studio together. "We had quite a bit of fun. He liked opera very much and would put on records while we worked. I didn't particularly care for opera so we came to an agreement on playing some classical stuff every now and then. He just did his work and would never complain."

In the mid-sixties horror fans were treated to some of Reed's greatest artwork. Warren Publishing was trying to recreate the old EC feel by printing in a magazine format, thereby not having to follow the Comics Code. Reed's inking was being refined by his use of many sketchy lines to create his depth and shadows. "Proofreader Eternal" Flo Steinberg recalls

those days at Warren. "I would see Reed at the office. He was a great guy and never had a problem with turning in his work on time."

With his failing health becoming a problem, Reed reluctantly retired from comics in the early seventies. Soon after, a crippling stroke put him into an elderly care home where he stayed until his death in 1982.

Namor's "Real" Human Father

Bill Everett, the creator of Marvel's first super hero, saw the world for the first time just three months after Reed Crandall in 1917. Even though he was born in Massachusetts, Bill spent his childhood in Arizona. After attending the Vesper George School of Art he found work in Boston doing advertising art. After bouncing across the country searching for a better job he went back to doing commercial art in New York, then Chicago, then back to New York. He was pretty much flat broke when he ran into an old friend named Walter Holze, who introduced Bill to comic books.

A short time after that he worked with a group of his friends in a small loft on 45th Street. They would be contracted by a publisher to do a book and then deliver the finished product. Bill had previously created the Sub-Mariner after recalling a poem entitled Rime of The Ancient Mariner. It told of a creature with a human form who lived in the sea. Bill spelled Roman backwards and got Namor.

Sub-Mariner's first adventure was told in a small comic that was given away as a promotional item at movie theaters. The project failed and Namor was almost forgotten until word came down that publisher Martin Goodman at Timely (Marvel) was looking for something new and interesting. The Human Torch and Namor quickly became the most popular characters in Goodman's stable of titles. Their epic battles that crossed over into each other's books reign as some of the greatest Golden Age comics ever published.

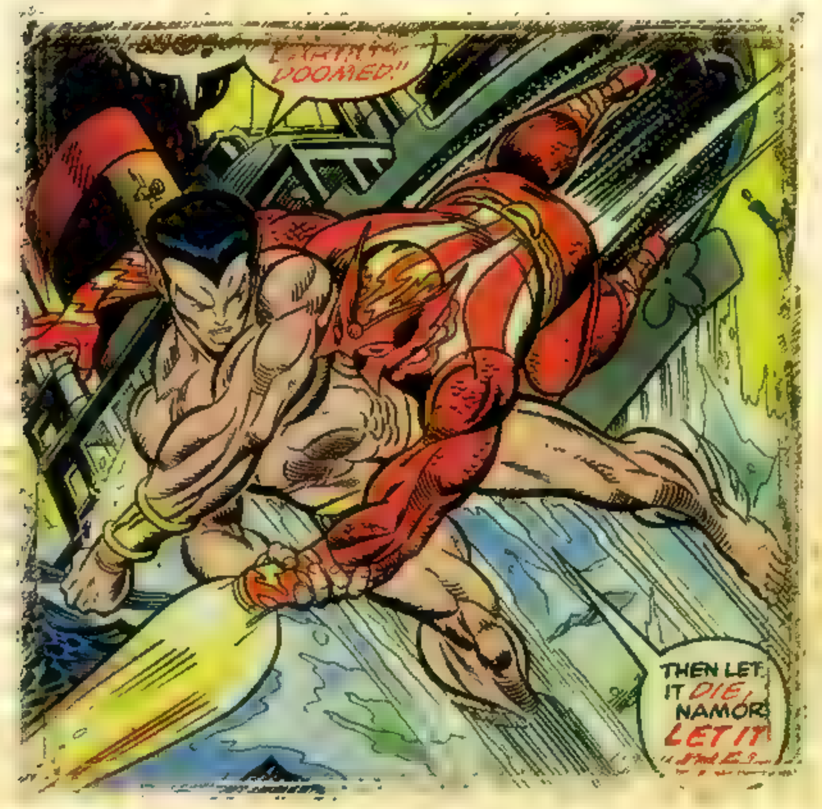
Bill Everett served in the armed forces during WWII and continued with Namor and his other aquatic characters upon his return to civilian life. He lost his comic book job in the mid-fifties and went to work for Norcross, a company that produced greeting cards. He continued with this line of work until Marvel put the comic book industry into high gear during the sixties.

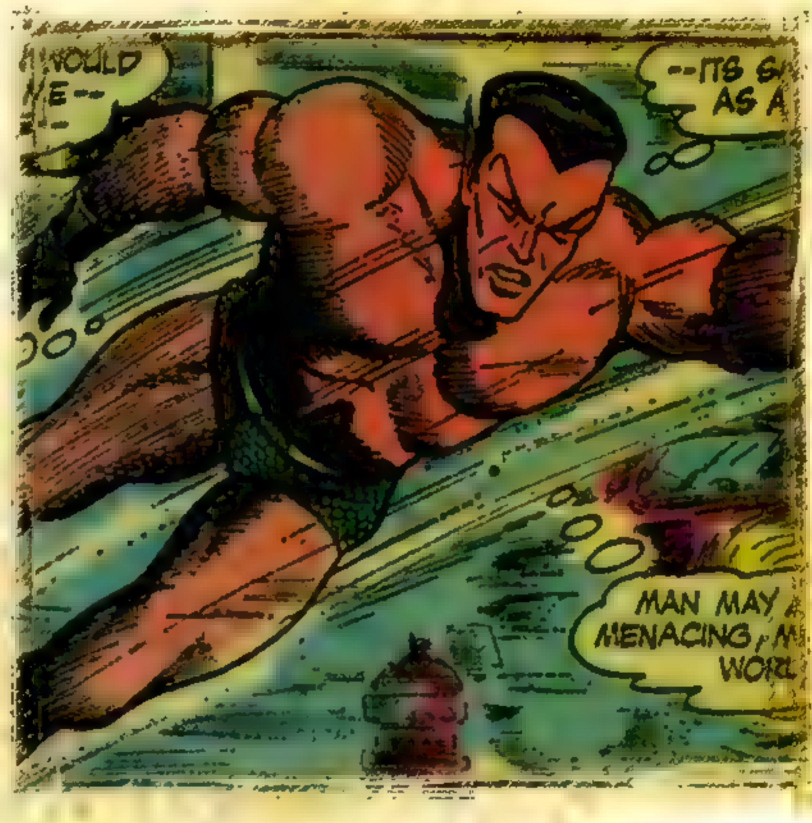
Through some coaxing by Stan, Bill returned to Marvel to pencil and ink Daredevil #1. "Bill was so happy to be back working in comics," says Flo Steinberg; "he never realized how much he missed it." John Romita, Sr. fulfilled a childhood dream: "Bill and I actually worked together...after I went on staff while he was there. This was a couple of years before he died. It was amazing, it was like being in the company of a giant. He was a founding father of comics. I was nine years old when Sub-Mariner came out. I'd known Bill Everett's name all my life and here I was now working with him!"

Roy Thomas and Bill Everett were very good friends. "We were roommates. I had an apartment in Greenwich Village and he also stayed with me for awhile when I moved to the Upper East Side. The funny thing is, the address for our place in the Village was also the address for Dr. Strange's house, 177A Bleecker Street." Bill worked on the book after Steve Ditko left and before Marie Severin took over with the art.

Issue #50 of Sub-Mariner had Bill working once again with his prodigy child. He also introduced Namorita in that story. Things had truly come full circle in his life. Unfortunately a new generation of readers would not have long to see this true innovator work on his greatest success. Bill Everett passed away a few month later.

—Dean Davis





MARVEL CHRONICLES
1977 PART 2:

It seems strange to end the MARVEL CHRONICLES series with 1977, because for many series it was not the most memorable of years. But as we look at a few key series in that year, 1977 may look like as good a point as any with which to end our story. Let's go through the 1977 Marvel books we haven't covered yet, and you'll see what I mean.

This was the first full year that Spider-Man starred in three books, not one. In the flagship title, AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, issue #166 featured one of those it-had-to-happen-sometime scenarios, in which Spidey's two reptilian adversaries—the Lizard and newcomer Stegron the Dinosaur Man—finally met and fought, although to little real purpose. The following issue introduced the year's one long-running new supporting character for Spider-Man, the Will o'the Wisp, a scientist who fell victim to an accident that weakened his molecular structure, but also endowed him with the ability to become intangible at will.

And then in #172 the Rocket Racer skated into Spider-Man's life. He was a young African-American inventor of a computer-controlled, rocket-powered skateboard—no, really—who originally used it for crime, but has kept resurfacing over the years as an occasional costumed crimefighter. Marvel writers keep coming up with characters on skates whom we're supposed to take seriously, going all the way back to Stan equipping Iron Man's boots with retractable roller skate wheels. Then there were Gaard, and the Dazzler, and even the skateboard Night Thrasher used in his early exploits, which somehow did not fit his grim avenger image. I suppose it's a tribute to Jack Kirby's genius that he made us take an alien on a flying surfboard seriously.

1977 was the first full year of Spidey's new companion series, originally titled PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN. This was by far the longest running Marvel super hero comic book introduced in the 1970s; only recently did SPECTACULAR finally bite the dust. In two of the 1977 issues Spider-Man teamed up with Marvel's first Latino super hero, Hector Ayala, the White Tiger. Hector was actually the heir of a team of martial artists, the Sons of the Tiger, who had appeared in Marvel's black and white magazine DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU. He had gotten hold of the enchanted amulets that enhanced the Sons' battle prowess; by wearing all three at once he became a master of the martial arts.

The best Spider-Man series of 1977, though, was surely MARVEL TEAM-UP, thanks to the talents of that landmark future X-MEN team Chris Claremont and John Byrne. Byrne came aboard first, drawing Bill Mantlo's storyline that brought Spider-Man and the Hulk together with one of Marvel's oddest heroes, Woodgod, who had debuted in MARVEL PREMIERE #31. He was a genetically engineered being who resembled a satyr from Greek mythology: a man with horns and lower half of a goat's body; originally unable to talk, Woodgod was another of Marvel's many characters who are unjustly persecuted for being different. This storyline ended up in issue #55 taking Spider-Man all the way to the moon, where he encountered Adam Warlock, whose series had been recently cancelled. This issue introduced the Gardener, another of the immortal, virtually omnipotent beings obsessed by a certain field of endeavor who would eventually be designated as the Elders of the Universe.

Byrne left TEAM-UP with that issue, but he returned in issue #59 to begin his memorable partnership with Chris Claremont on the title, starting with a two-parter teaming Spider-Man with the classic Marvel duo of Henry Pym, then in his Yellowjacket identity, and the Wasp. This was followed by Spidey's team-up with new Marvel star Ms. Marvel against the Super-Skrull and a two-parter resolving a leftover storyline from the just cancelled IRON FIST series, as the Fist finally had a showdown with his rival, Steel Serpent.

The best of the Claremont/Byrne TEAM-UPS would come the following year, though, as Spider-Man and Thor took on the gigantic Living Monolith, and the unprecedented meeting of Spider-Man and Red Sonja, whose spirit briefly usurped the body of his future wife Mary Jane Watson!

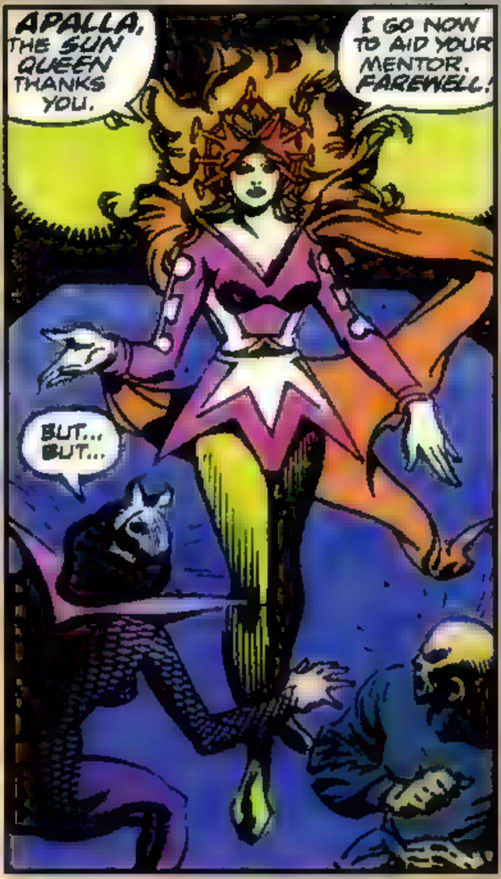
Jim Shooter took over writing THE AVENGERS in 1977 after Gerry Conway left the title. In issue #158 Shooter introduced a new villain, Graviton, who controlled the force of gravity. In a story drawn by George Pérez Shooter brought back Henry Pym's creation, the sinister robot Ultron, whose intense Oedipal complex drove him to try to kill his "father," Pym. Shooter realized it would have another effect as well, and so had Ultron capture Pym's wife, the Wasp, and use her life force to animate the robot he intended to be his mate, Jocasta, who has repeatedly turned up over the years since then.

His most significant story that year, however, was a three-parter drawn by the now omnipresent John Byrne, in which longtime Avengers villain Count Nefaria made himself virtually unstoppable by draining into himself the superhuman powers of three other enemies of the team: the Living Laser, the super-fast Whirlwind, and the superhumanly strong Power Man. This "Power Man," by the way, was not Luke Cage but the original possessor of the name, the character THUNDERBOLTS readers know today as Atlas. This story set a chain of unexpected events in motion: Nefaria's new powers were too much for his human body, leaving him a burnt-out shell.

Jim Starlin wound up the saga of Adam Warlock (for the next decade and a half, anyway) in the 1977 annuals for AVENGERS and MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE. In the first the Avengers join forces with the two Marvel heroes with whom Starlin is still most identified, Warlock and Captain Mar-Vell, against his most famous villainous creation, Thanos. Warlock "dies" in the course of the battle, but his spirit lives on within a mystical world inside the Soul Gem he wore. There Warlock finds a kind of heaven alongside the spirits of his friends and allies Gamora and Pip the Troll.

The tale continued in the MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE ANNUAL, which brought the Thing and Spider-Man into the fray, while affectingly portraying Spider-Man's bewilderment at finding himself in a battle against aliens in outer space, a situation far removed from his normal milieu. This saga climaxes with Warlock's brief return from the dead long enough to transform Thanos into a living but immobile statue.

And thus the saga of Warlock and Thanos came at last to an end. Perhaps we should be surprised in retrospect that these characters did not get revived by other writers within a year or two. But the Marvel writers and editors of that time respected Starlin's work and let his resolution of the tale of these characters stand. It was not until the early 1990s, when Starlin returned to Marvel, that these characters were finally resurrected under his auspices.



Steve Gerber's stint on THE DEFENDERS was unique and inimitable in its intelligent brand of sheer strangeness. But the team of David Anthony Kraft and Keith Giffen took the series in unusual directions of their own. They brought back Scorpio, one of the foremost creations of Jim Steranko in his classic run on NICK FURY, AGENT OF SHIELD. Long believed to be dead, Scorpio had been revealed after Steranko left Marvel to have been Fury's own younger brother Jake turned criminal. In the hands of Kraft and Giffen the now unmasked Scorpio became a study in middle-aged burnout, a younger brother who had failed to equal his brother and now was lost in a fantasy world of his own creation, populated by androids. One android was even a replica of Nick, who developed a genuine sympathy for his alcoholic master. Failing even at crime, Jake finally committed suicide, although, as Marvel readers should expect, this would not be the end of Scorpio: Steve Englehart would revive him in android form in the 1980s.

Jim Starlin also wrote DOCTOR STRANGE in 1977, spinning a tale about the Creators, wizards who sought to take the places and forms of the stars in the heavens. Although this has seldom been noted in the following years, this storyline established that at least some stars in the Marvel Universe are intelligent beings. (After all, if we can have Ego the Living Planet, why not?) In fact, we even met one of them in issue #22, Apalla, Queen of the Sun, a star who had taken human form. (In the 1980s we would also meet Cloud, a girl who turned out to be an entire nebula in the form of a teenage girl!)

FANTASTIC FOUR #178 began the year with a story dear to the hearts of Marvel VISION's "Silliest Moments" fans, the tale in which the criminal Frightful Four, their ranks reduced to a mere frightful three, took over the Fantastic Four's Baxter Building headquarters and then placed an ad in the newspaper asking potential new members to go there to audition. I'm sorry, if I was a super-villain and had taken over the Baxter Building, I would not place an ad telling the police and all of New York's super heroes where I was. And do we really believe that unemployed super-villains sit home and read the want ads?

Things picked up in issues #185 and #186 in the hands of Len Wein and George Pérez, who took the Fantastic Four and the readers off to New Salem, a hidden town populated by witches and warlocks who had settled there long ago to escape persecution. This was where Agatha Harkness, Franklin's nanny, came from, and in this tale she and the FF faced off against her malevolent son, the devilishly named Nicholas Scratch, and his minions, Salem's Seven.

Little of lasting importance happened in the Hulk's regular comic in 1977, unless someday someone decides to bring back Bruce Banner's 1970s long-forgotten girlfriend, the seasonally named April Sommers. True, we did first meet the villainous Constrictor in issue #212, although he has faded into obscurity of late. And issues #212 and #213 guest-starred the Jack of Hearts, a new super hero from the pages of DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU, who nevertheless had nothing to do with martial arts. After being doused in "zero fluid" he mutated into a being who had to wear a suit of armor to contain the tremendous energies his body generated. (What has never been explained is what all this has to do with the playing card he's named after.) Jack has more recently shown up in SILVER SURFER, and zero fluid will soon play a new role in ALPHA FLIGHT.

Over in the HULK ANNUAL the Enclave, the organization of scientists who created "Him," later known as Adam Warlock, genetically engineered a new creation, Paragon, who would later on take female form and be known as (what else?) "Her."

But the real news for Hulk fans that year was the debut of a new black and white magazine, entitled THE RAMPAGING HULK, with new stories written by Doug Moench and superbly illustrated by Walt Simonson. The inspired gimmick was that these stories were set in the gap between the cancellation of the Hulk's original six-issue series and his return in TALES TO ASTONISH. This meant that instead of the childlike brutish Hulk with which 1970s readers were familiar, Moench and Simonson went back to what the Hulk was like in HULK #6: intelligent and articulate, even if he was hot-tempered and violent. In other words, this was a Hulk much like the one we have frequently seen during Peter David's long run on the series in the late 1980s and the 1990s!

The recurring villains in RAMPAGING HULK were an invading race of absurd but dangerous space aliens called the Krylorians. The short, warlike males were humorously grotesque, while on the other hand, Krylorian females, as represented by the Hulk's ally Bereet, were tall and gorgeous.

Immensely entertaining as the RAMPAGING tales were, they did not last long. Even more surprisingly, they were later banished from Marvel's official continuity: the explanation was that they were all "techno-art" special effects movies created by Bereet, who seems to have been the Krylorians' answer to Steven Spielberg. I suspect the reason for thus explaining away these stories was that RAMPAGING's version of the Hulk seemed too far removed from the Hulk's "official" personality. Little did anyone realize that a decade later the smart Hulk would come back into fashion.

Over in the World War II-era stories Roy Thomas was writing for THE INVADERS, Jacqueline Falsworth, the daughter of the original Union Jack, Britain's hero of World War I, became a super heroine herself named Spitfire. Much of the year was taken up by a long storyline set behind enemy lines, which introduced the Nazi super-soldier Master Man's intended mate, Warrior Woman, and featured Adolf Hitler himself as the master villain. Thomas took the opportunity to reintroduce a Golden Age hero created by Stan Lee himself, who could best be described as a wartime version of the Punisher who fought Nazis: the Mighty Destroyer. Actually, this Destroyer turned out to be Union Jack's son, Brian Falsworth, who in the course of the story succeeded his dad as Union Jack and turned over his Destroyer persona to his best friend. And in that year's INVADERS ANNUAL Roy Thomas revisited the Avengers-Invaders battle staged by the alien Grandmaster in AVENGERS #71, this time from the Invaders' point of view!

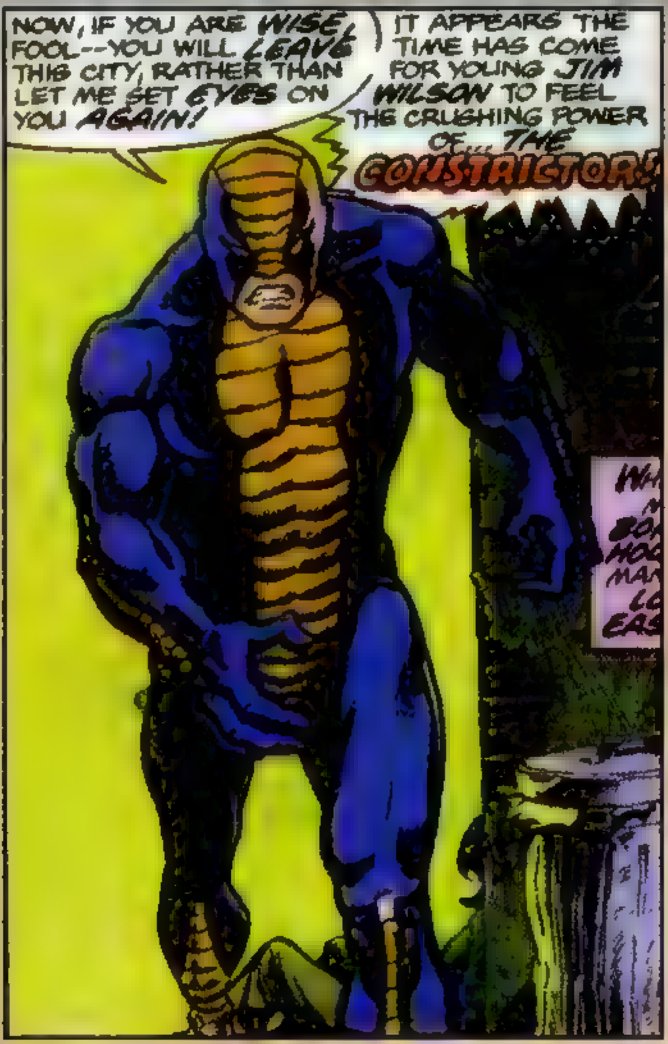
1977's IRON MAN stories turned Tony Stark's adversary Michael O'Brien into Iron Man's ally, the new Guardsman, introduced the villainous Dreadknight (in a story involving Frankenstein's Monster!), and brought the deceased Mandarin back to life in a new, younger body. And, probably to everyone's surprise, Stark's secretary Krissy Longfellow turned out to be his old ally, Madame Masque, in disguise. She revealed her true identity when their mutual adversary Midas, the billionaire who dressed in ancient Greek style, somehow seized control of Stark Industries. Carried away by their own passions, Tony and Madame Masque, who now knew his dual identity, hid out on a Stark estate to pursue their love affair. Nick Fury, among others, figuratively had to drag them back almost against their will to fight Midas.

Early in the 1970s Marvel had tried to feature some female heroes in their own titles, namely THE CAT (who is now Tigra) and SHANNA THE SHE-DEVIL. Both quickly failed, but in 1977 the company tried again, this time with a heroine who could hold her own in hand-to-hand combat even with super-strong male heroes. This was Carol Danvers, the Cape Canaveral security chief from the CAPTAIN MARVEL series, who had been exposed to the radiation of a Kree device years ago. The delayed effect now endowed her with super-powers, and she became the star of her own series, MS. MARVEL, written by Gerry Conway and drawn by John Buscema. After the first few issues, though, a new writer took over, who was already making a reputation for himself for portraying fiercely independent and formidable heroines: the X-Men's Chris Claremont. And in issue #9 he created a new adversary for Carol who would go on to menace the X-Men themselves: Deathbird, the renegade member of the royal family of the alien Shi'ar Empire.

In another case of a story that seems inevitable, despite its innate silliness, in THOR #255 the Thunder God had a rematch with the alien villains from his very first story, those Easter Island statue lookalikes, the Stone Men from Saturn. In that year's annual Thor teamed up with the Guardians of the Galaxy against the cyborg Korvac, who would in the not too distant future turn into an even greater menace to all the Avengers under the name of Michael, the Enemy. But the most significant event for Thor's future was writer Len Wein's collaboration on the series with artist Walter Simonson. Simonson did magnificent artwork on these 1977 issues,

but they merely foreshadow his long stint as writer and artist on THOR in the 1980s, one of the finest bodies of work in Marvel's history, rivaling even Lee and Kirby's own classic run on THOR.

This was also Jack Kirby's last year writing and drawing the most long-lasting of his co-creations, Captain America. That year's CAP issues are best remembered for the storyline in issues #209 through #212. On his return to Marvel Kirby had ignored all but a few established Marvel characters, apparently preferring to create new ones for Cap to encounter. But now he brought back another of his greatest co-creations, Cap's foremost nemesis, the Red Skull. Kirby gave the Skull an intriguing new philosophical bent,



seeing himself linked inextricably by fate to the Captain. More importantly, Kirby introduced a startling new ally for the Skull, the Nazi genetic engineer Arnim Zola, who had used his science to reconfigure his own body. Hence Kirby gave us the unforgettably grotesque image of Zola's face staring out from the trunk of his own headless body; later, it would be explained that Zola's face was no more than an image on a television screen!

In the 1977 CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL Kirby returned to another of his master villains from the past, the recently revived Magneto, who had put together a brand new Brotherhood of Evil Mutants with all new members. Most of these new Brotherhood members would resurface in the future under the name Mutant Force and later as members of the Resistants in CAPTAIN AMERICA. But the most imaginative of Kirby's creations in this story has never been seen again: Mister One and Mister Two, a single entity who inhabits two bodies, one tiny and helpless and the other large and brutally strong.

1977 also saw the end of Kirby's last great series, THE ETERNALS, which chronicled the war between two superhuman races, the idealized Eternals and the demonic Deviants, with humanity caught in the middle, while the ominous "space gods," the Celestials, silently watched, preparing for an inevitable Day of Judgment. It was in this final year that the Eternal princess Thena descended into the Deviant underworld with her former lover, the Deviant warlord Kro. There, watching the murderous gladiatorial "games" the Deviants staged, Thena first saw two of the warriors: Karkas, whose philosophical soul belied his monstrous appearance, and the Reject, despised by the Deviants for resembling a human in his handsomeness. Thena became a mentor to the Reject, whose nearly feral savagery was reminiscent of Wolverine in his berserker days. Thena's journey ended catastrophically as one of the Celestials invaded the Deviant city, triggering a Biblical-style deluge that engulfed the underground race.

Issue #18 brought the first depiction of the Dreaming Celestial, the renegade space god condemned to burial beneath the Earth, who would threaten the cosmos in years to come in stories written by Walter Simonson for FANTASTIC FOUR and the second ETERNALS series.

But one of the most stunning sights in the whole original ETERNALS series was that in issue #12 of the entire worldwide community of Eternals rising into the sky to combine into a single being, the Uni-Mind, the living embodiment of pure intellect, raised to godlike levels.

With the cancellation of Marvel VISION, we are forced to end the Chronicles series with 1977, twenty-one years before the present day: the space of an entire generation. There is so much still to cover. How Chris Claremont and John Byrne together created two landmark comics epics in UNCANNY X-MEN—The Dark Phoenix saga and "Days of Future Past"—and how X-MEN went on to become the most successful book in comics and gave rise to a still growing family of related titles. How Frank Miller revolutionalized the tone, style, and psychological complexity of super hero comics with his work on DAREDEVIL. How Marvel's Epic line of creator-owned comics evolved under the editorial aegis of the late, much missed Archie Goodwin. How Jim Shooter's SECRET WARS launched the era of company-wide crossovers and "event" comics which still continues today. How Todd McFarlane, Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld and others brought about a generational shift in super hero art styles that changed the look of comics more radically than anything had since the 1960s, and how this new style has itself rapidly metamorphised into the Japanese-influenced look of today's comics. (If you want to know more about Marvel history, you might look for my book, MARVEL UNIVERSE, published by the Harry Abrams company.)

And we still have to resolve 1977's HOWARD THE DUCK cliffhanger, in which poor Howard had been transformed into a nondescript human. (Well, believe it or not, a night of passion with a young woman named Amy Pope restored his duckhood, so to speak.) And even to correct the few mistakes that crept into the published versions of past CHRONICLES (Nova was Richard Rider, not Richard Rory. And the Headmen's Ruby Thursday was named after a Rolling Stones song. Thank you, Murray Ward).

The Chronicles leave off at what in hindsight proves to be a milestone, as Jack Kirby, the single most influential creator in American comic books, takes his leave, and two creators of the next generation, Claremont and Byrne are just beginning their work on X-MEN that will set the mold for the super hero team book right into the present day. If the Chronicles must end, this is not at all a bad place to stop.

After all, over the course of Marvel VISION's life, we've managed to cover the comics of the Silver Age of the 1960s, the foundation of everything Marvel has done since, and the stories crafted by the first wave of fans-turned-pros who entered the business, who saw how Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, and their colleagues had provided an artistic form through which new writers and artists could express their own personal visions.

To more fully understand and appreciate what Marvel is, you have to have a sense of the richness and complexity of its history, how the stories of today have evolved from the classics of the past, and how characterizations have grown and deepened over the years as they pass through the perspectives of various creators and their times. Each individual story is a new component among the thousands of tales over thirty-six years that make up the ongoing saga of the Marvel Universe, one of the great, if underappreciated, achievements of American popular culture. If the Chronicles have succeeded in imparting to new readers a sense of the grandeur and worth of this long and glorious tapestry of storytelling, then it has done its job well.

By Peter Sanderson

How to start the mother of all wars

{or why deception, cruelty and betrayal are your friends}

To start "The War of the Lions," you must use bold strokes. Regicides, double-crosses, violations of queens, good options all. Whatever your plan, once begun, a war of this magnitude is not to be trifled with. This is a brutal conflict of epic proportions, where each hallowed victory brings you closer to the very heart of darkness. Battle after battle, you will command your fighting party across magical lands protected by hostile forces. You will need the help of the bravest warriors, as well as armor, weapons, intricate battle plans and magical spells. Be ruthless. Be clever. Or be dead.

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{or how to ensure the biggest, baddest, meanest SOBs are on your side}

In Final Fantasy Tactics,™ you are Ramza, a young squad leader and an ally of Princess Ovelia. It's up to you to lead an elite fighting squad of your own choosing into battle. You must train them to be powerful Black Mages who can cast magic spells, Summoners who can awaken terrible beasts, Wizards, Ninjas, Bards, Archers, Thieves and more. There are 19 fighting classes and 400 abilities to master. If you go into battle ill-prepared, may the enemy make the blood run from your heart.

Effective battle strategies

{or further discussions from the annals of shoot first, ask questions later}

As the ancient history of warfare reveals, you will survive if your battle strategy is strong, and perish if it is not. You will lead the charge through impressive lands trying to gain the best strategic positions in forests, castle ramparts, swamps and valleys. You can buy and sell equipment, hire new soldiers and plan glorious battle strategies. May you conquer the enemy or may you die trying.

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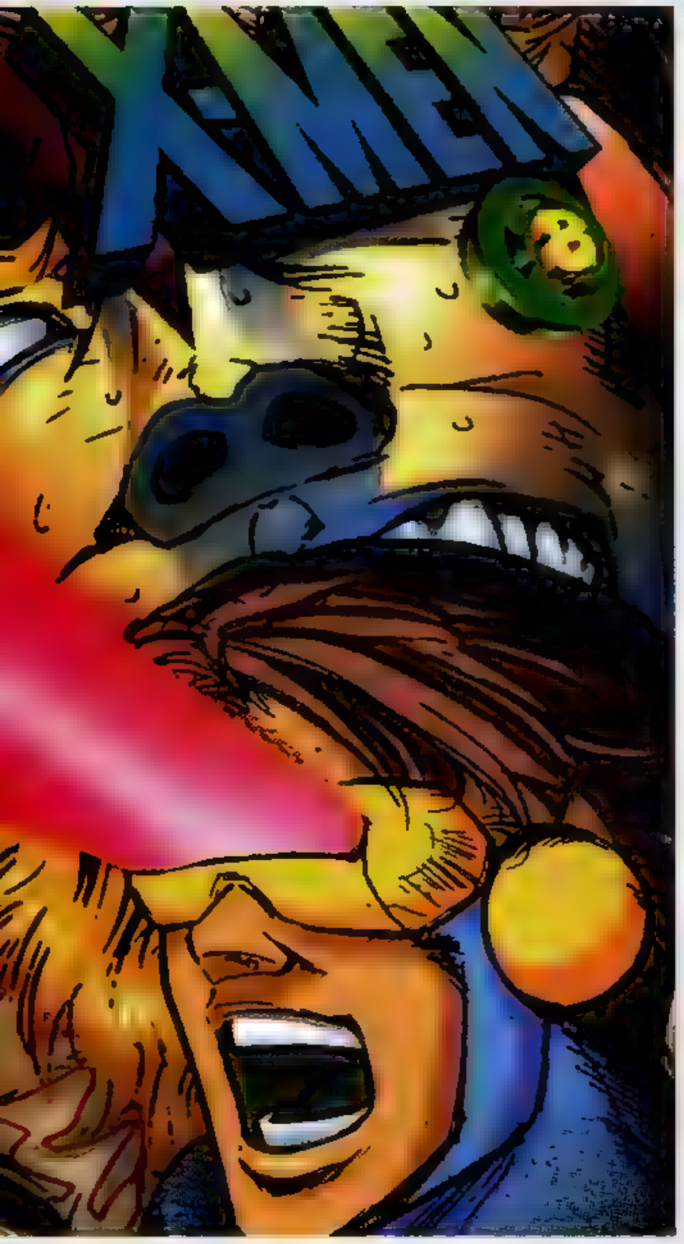
MARVEL IMPORTS



ON SALE JUNE 3

X-MEN: THE MANGA NO. 10

REI NAKAHARA

Special 40-page finale to the Morlock saga! In the darkened tunnels below New York City, the **X-Men** encounter the strange and unique beings known as the Morlocks! Plus: **Storm** vs. **Callisto** in hand-to-hand combat! And: a special surprise twist involving **Wolverine**!

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RYOICHI IKEGAMI

Beginning a controversial, decidedly different, and offbeat story that spotlights the human side of the Japanese Spider-Man! In his civilian guise as Yu Komori, Spider-Man stops a brutal crime—but he's wrongly implicated as one of the culprits! Now he must go undercover to gather evidence and expose the true villains! ***2.99***

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On his own in the Arctic wastelands, **Wolverine** has a run-in with his arch-enemy, **Sabretooth!** ***2.99***

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RYOICHI IKEGAMI

Continuing the multi-part saga that spotlights Spider-Man's civilian identity! As Yu Komori continues his investigation into a brutal crime for which he was wrongfully implicated, he finds himself ostracized at school—and facing mortal danger from the true culprits! ***2.99***

MARVEL PRESENTS

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VARIOUS

The official, full-color photo magazine celebrating Doctor Who!

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DAN ABNETT & IAN EDGINTON/ANDREW CURRIE/ART NICHOLS

Continuing Marvel's all-new sci-fi adventure! The battle rages on as the Seeker is boarded by the barbaric Hkkkt! Can Vaun and Cyrene, along with their new allies the Medusae, turn the tide of war from defeat to victory? And if that wasn't enough, does Censys, the ship's computer, have its own hidden agenda? ***2.50***

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COVER BY CLAUDIO CASTELLINI

ROLAND GREEN/GEOF ISHERWOOD/SANDU FLOREA

The thrilling conclusion to Conan's latest adventure! With the conflict in the Black Kingdom reaching its height, Conan the Barbarian (along with the lethal Valeria) must bulldoze throught overwhelming odds in order to save a village—and his own hide! It's a tale of swords, sorcery and Conan, Lord of the Crocodiles! Huh? Conan Lord of the *what*?! Crom! ***2.50***

MARVEL HEROES

ON SALE JUNE 3

DAREDEVIL NO. 378
"FLYING BLIND" PART 3 OF 4
SCOTT LOBDELL/TOM MORGAN/SCOTT HANNA
Continuing the controversial new story arc written by Scott Lobdell! Wrapped in a web of intrigue, more of **Matt Murdock's** memories resurface—as do **Foggy Nelson, S.H.I.E.L.D.**, 2 villains from his past and 1 all-new threat! ***1.99***

THE RAMPAGING HULK NO. 1
WRAPAROUND COVER BY RICK LEONARDI
GLENN GREENBERG/RICK LEONARDI
Hulk smash! It's the double-sized first issue of the brand-new, ongoing, monthly series set during the classic *savage* Hulk era! Get ready to travel back in time to experience—for the very first time—all-new stories starring the green goliath everyone knows and loves! Plus: familiar faces, *new allies* and, of course, *new foes*! As **Dr. Bruce Banner** desperately searches for a cure from his tragic curse, his eternal adversaries **General Thunderbolt Ross** and **Major Glenn Talbot** stand on the brink of finally defeating his monstrous alter-ego! And in the midst of this heated battle, you'll see the Hulk as you've never seen him before! And with all of the changes the jade giant's gone through during his legendary life, that's really saying something! It's a modern take on classic characters! It's a fresh look at one of Marvel's greatest creations! It's the Hulk destroying everything in his path! Run, puny humans, here comes THE RAMPAGING HULK! ***2.99***

FANTASTIC FOUR NO. 8
CHRIS CLAREMONT/SALVADOR LARROCA
The FF vs. the entire corp of Captain Britain—for the fate of Franklin Richards! At the heart of the universe, **Roma**, the guardian of creation, rules the life of Reed & Sue's only child! Have **Mr. Fantastic** and the **Invisible Woman** been reunited with their son only to lose him forever?! Oh yeah, one more thing, did we mention the possible end of life in the Marvel Universe as we know it? ***1.99***

KA-ZAR NO. 16
CHRISTOPHER PRIEST/KENNY MARTINEZ/ANIBAL RODRIGUEZ
Guest-starring the Punisher! Frank Castle is finished *stalking* **Ka-Zar**—now it's time to nail his prey! He's convinced Ka-Zar is a murderer, and the Punisher is going to exact justice—his way! Plus: **Shanna** and **Zira** face the fight of their lives as the many deadly races of the Savage Land want their scalps—literally! ***1.99***

THOR NO. 2 (A)
COVER BY JOHN ROMITA JR. & KLAUS JANSON
DAN JURGENS/JOHN ROMITA JR./KLAUS JANSON
The question of Thor's new ongoing status quo is answered here—in the most astonishing and dramatic way possible! With the Thunder God powerless to intervene, the unstoppable **Destroyer** bulldozes his way through the ranks of the **Avengers**! In order to rejoin the fight, **Thor** must make a grim bargain with **Hela** and the mysterious, yet hauntingly familiar, **Marnot**—but will Odin's son barter away his future in order to save his allies in the present?! ***1.99***

ON SALE JUNE 10

ALPHA FLIGHT NO. 13
STEVEN T. SEAGLE/ASHLEY WOOD
Everyone knows there is no 13th floor in the **Department H** headquarters—everyone except the man who works there! ***1.99***

IRON MAN NO. 7
"LIVE KREE OR DIE!" PART 1 OF 4
KURT BUSIEK/SEAN CHEN/SEAN PARSONS
The expatriate **Kree** forces of **Galen Kor** (now using their race's traditional name of the **Lunatic Legion)** are back—and they want revenge on the **Avengers** for murdering the **Supreme Intelligence**! Their goal: the formation of a new Kree empire—with Earth as the centerpiece! ***1.99***

ON SALE JUNE 10

MARVEL ANNUAL '98 STARRING:
THE HULK & SUB-MARINER

WRAPAROUND COVER BY DOUG WHEATLEY
CHRIS COOPER/DOUG WHEATLEY

Distraught over events from THE INCREDIBLE HULK #466, the jade giant finds himself without a friend in the whole wide world—so he heads under the waves to drown his sorrows! But a trip to Atlantis provides a new life for the new, *blue* **Hulk**! But when his newfound happiness is threatened, the Hulk and Namor, the **Sub-Mariner** must unite to battle a new menace unleashed by **Attuma**! Wait a minute—*blue* Hulk?! What's going on here?! ***2.99***

MARVEL UNIVERSE NO. 3

COVER BY PAUL SMITH
ROGER STERN/STEVE EPTING/AL WILLIAMSON

The all-new series that reveals never-before-seen adventures in Marvel history continues with a cover by Paul Smith (LEAVE IT TO CHANCE)! Trapped aboard the giant battleship-swallowing Sea Dragon, **Captain America**, the original **Human Torch**, the **Whizzer** and the **Sub-Mariner** battle as never before to dismantle the neophyte organization known as **Hydra**! The **Invaders** must stop Hydra before they use their atomic bomb—and it's a fight they're destined to lose! ***1.99***

ON SALE JUNE 17

CAPTAIN AMERICA NO. 8

"LIVE KREE OR DIE!" PART 2 OF 4
MARK WAID/ANDY KUBERT/JESSE DELPERDANG

The super-hot art team of **Andy Kubert** and **Jesse Delperdang** officially join the team for part 2 of "Live Kree Or Die!" **The industry's best talents and coolest characters come together as the Earth's Mightiest crossover continues from IRON MAN #7!** ***1.99***

HEROES FOR HIRE NO. 14

JOHN OSTRANDER/MARY MITCHELL/JAIME MENDOZA

Chivalry lives as a special spotlight on the Black Knight! H4H is hired by the IRS to investigate a corporate raider who also happens to be—a mythical, fire-breathing dragon! But after Dane Whitman confronts the mysterious exec, whose side will the skeptical Knight take? ***1.99***

INCREDIBLE HULK NO. 467

PETER DAVID/ADAM KUBERT/MARK FARMER

This is it, after 11 years chronicling the life of the green goliath, ***Peter David pens his last issue of THE INCREDIBLE HULK!*****Hulk is the strongest one there is, but can he kill—*himself*?!** Distraught over the shocking events of last issue—and the funeral he attends in *this* issue—the Hulk attempts to end it all! And when the big guy tries to off himself, everybody else better watch out! What shocks does Peter have planned for his last issue? This is an issue you just can't miss as history is made, a final chapter is written, and a new adventure begins! ***1.99***

THE INCREDIBLE HULK: BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
TRADE PAPERBACK

VARIOUS

Hulkmania continues with a new volume celebrating the epic romance of Bruce and Betty! Featuring the talents of **Stan Lee**, **John Byrne**, **Andy Kubert**, **Peter David**, **Andy Kubert**, **Jack Kirby** and more, this collection follows the star-crossed lovers from their very first meeting to their historic wedding and beyond! ***16.99***

MARVEL ANNUAL '98 STARRING:
THE SILVER SURFER & THOR

WRAPAROUND COVER BY RAMON BERNADO & MARK PENNINGTON
TOM DEFALCO/RAMON BERNADO/MARK PENNINGTON

Condemned to spend eternity in an uncharted dimensional realm, **Milennius**, the warrior-god of Titan, has discovered the one person who can free him from his prison—and his name is the **Silver Surfer**! And when the evil immortal harnesses the Sky-Rider's Power Cosmic, the mighty **Thor** must bring down the thunder to save the universe!

2.99

ON SALE JUNE 17

THUNDERBOLTS NO. 17
KURT BUSIEK/MARK BAGLEY/SCOTT HANNA

Graviton is back! Graviton is bad! And Graviton has both the Thunderbolts and the Lightningrods completely on the ropes! Plus: **Atlas** must deal with the repercussions of what's happened to his family—and **Baron Zemo's** plan for revenge against his former team leads to a climactic showdown!

7-59606-03566-3-01711 .... ***1.99***

ON SALE JUNE 24

QUICKSILVER NO. 10 "LIVE KREE OR DIE!" PART 3 OF 4
JOHN OSTRANDER & JOE EDKIN/DEREC AUCOIN/RICH FABER

Quicksilver joins with the **Scarlet Witch** and **Hawkeye**—the *first* group of new Avengers—on a deadly mission to the newly recreated Blue Area of the Moon. Their goal: free the imprisoned **Carol Danvers**, and prevent the **Lunatic Legion** from mutating the entire populace of Earth into the next generation of Kree hybrids! But disaster awaits when Carol's drinking problem places her comrades in peril! Meanwhile, the still-unstable **High Evolutionary** prepares the **Knights** for the assault on **Exodus** at Wundagore Mountain! And best of all, the action continues into AVENGERS #7! ***1.99***

AVENGERS NO. 7 "LIVE KREE OR DIE!" PART 4 OF 4
KURT BUSIEK/GEORGE PÉREZ/AL VEY

The **Lunatic Legion's** plan for Earth has been exposed, and the Avengers head to the moon for a bombastic battle royale! But first, the order changeth, as Earth's Mightiest Heroes must cope with the fall of one of their own! ***1.99***

DEADPOOL NO. 19
JOE KELLY/WALTER MCDANIEL/LIVESAY

Landau, Luckman & Lake came clean with **Deadpool** about their goals for him: he's the herald of a cosmic event which will usher in a golden age for the universe. Heady stuff! Now they're sending him on his first mission towards that goal: knock out a massive military cosmos-watching installation. But with L,L & L there's always a catch, and 'Pool's about to find out whether he really measures up or not! ***1.99***

IRON FIST NO. 2 (OF 3)
COVER BY CARLOS PACHECO
DAN JURGENS/JACKSON GUICE/SCOTT KOBLISH

Continuing Iron Fist's all-new limited series! To save the life of the sister he thought was long dead, the martial arts master must penetrate the heart of **S.H.I.E.L.D.'s** stronghold—and retrieve the fabled Scorpio Key! But can Danny Rand bring himself to turn over such cosmic power to evil hands? ***2.50***

IRON MAN: THE IRON AGE NO. 1 (OF 2)
KURT BUSIEK/PATRICK ZIRCHER/BOB MCLEOD

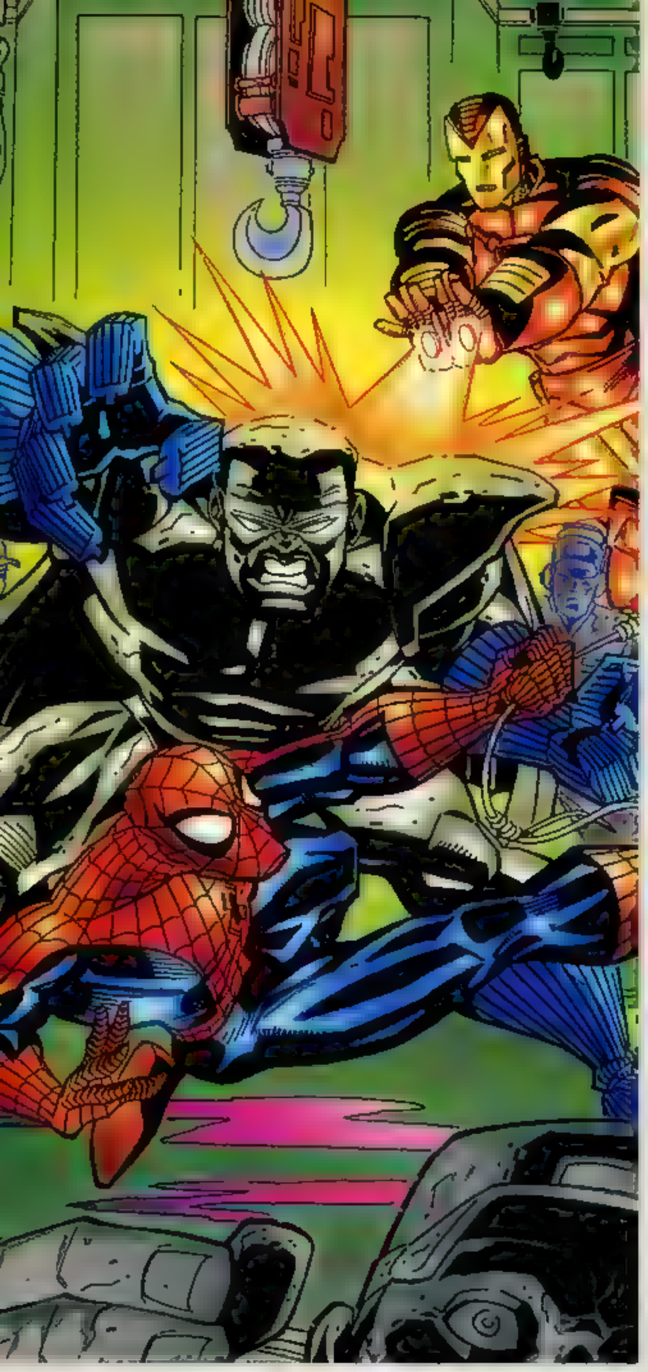
Hot on the heels of his triumphant return, **Iron Man** stars in a two-part, double-sized adventure that exposes never-before-revealed secrets! You know that **Tony Stark** is a cool exec with a heart of steel, but do you know how he transformed from a glib playboy into a brilliant industrialist and iron-willed hero? Set around the time of TALES OF SUSPENSE #41, this "untold tale" with a twist reveals how the deaths of Tony's parents forged his destiny—and also reveals the fact that their tragic demise may *not* have been an accident, but may have been caused by a brand-new foe! ***5.99***

MARVEL NO. 3

What events do Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti have planned for the Marvel Universe? Find out here! And make sure you get the full scoop concerning September products in MARVEL, our all-new, all-different catalog! Featuring the most comprehensive listings for *all* products coming from the House of Ideas, each 48-page issue of this monthly magazine will feature exclusive interviews with the industry's top creators, in-depth articles on upcoming, high-profile projects, a pull-out poster, a complete checklist and more! Comics, t-shirts, statues, video games—if it's from Mighty Marvel, it's in here! ***1.99***

SILVER SURFER NO. 142
J.M. DEMATTEIS/JON J. MUTH

Continuing the story-arc featuring the art of Jon J. Muth! Tenebrae and the alien collective called **The Union** are preparing to invade Earth! The only one with the power to stop them is the **Silver Surfer**—but he's cut off from home, lost in a mysterious new universe! Meanwhile, **Alicia Masters**, trapped on a desolate alien world, struggles to save her own life—and the life of the machine-being known as **Cipher**! ***1.99***



SPIDER-MAN

ON SALE JUNE 3

THE ESSENTIAL SPIDER-MAN VOL. 3 TRADE PAPERBACK
STAN LEE/JOHN ROMITA SR.
Continuing the must-have, affordable collection gathering the early, ground-breaking Spider-Man adventures integral to the Marvel canon! *12.99*

SENSATIONAL SPIDER-MAN NO. 30
COVER BY MIKE WIERINGO
TODD DEZAGO/ROBERTO FLORES/JUAN BELASCO
Spider-Man & the Black Cat enter Murderworld! A teenage runaway has both Spidey and Felicia Hardy on his trail—a trail which leads them both into a death-trap created by the insane **Arcade!** *1.99*

ON SALE JUNE 10

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN NO. 437
TOM DEFALCO/JOE BENNETT/BUD LAROSA
Can it be: Spider-Man's a real spider?! Have we lost our minds?! Maybe—maybe not! You won't believe the wild transformation that occurs when Peter Parker becomes subject to the awesome power of **Plant Man**, the fluorinic fiend! *1.99*

MARVEL ADVENTURES NO. 17 STARRING SPIDER-MAN
RALPH MACCHIO/ANDY KUHN/HARRY CANDELARIO
Guest-starring the Invincible Iron Man! *1.50*

ON SALE JUNE 17

PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN NO. 94
HOWARD MACKIE/JOHN ROMITA JR./SCOTT HANNA
From the heights of the devastated Four Freedoms Plaza to the depths of the darkest back room of the Hellfire Club, Spider-Man searches the Marvel Universe for the answer he must have: "Who was Joey Z?"! *1.99*

SPIDER-MAN: MADE MEN
HOWARD MACKIE/NORMAN FELCHE
This gangster epic—seen from the point of view of the underworld itself—rocks the status quo of the crimelords of the Marvel Universe! In the back alleys and press rooms and smoky pool rooms they're talking in hushed whispers. And they're scared. Immense forces are mobilizing for a gang war to end them all—and the mean streets of New York City are about to run crimson with blood. The **Rose, Fortunato,** the **Black Tarantula, Hammerhead**—they all lay claim to their personal slice of the crime scene. But things are about to change. *5.99*

ON SALE JUNE 24

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN NO. 260
COVER BY JOHN ROMITA SR.
ROGER STERN & GLENN GREENBERG/LUKE ROSS/DAN GREEN
It's a showdown between the original Hobgoblin and the original Green Goblin—with Spider-Man caught in the middle! *1.99*

SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED NO. 21
CHRISTOPHER GOLDEN/MIKE DEODATO JR./JOE PIMENTEL
Frankenstein's Monster lives! While on assignment in Eastern Europe with Daily Bugle reporter **Betty Brant, Peter Parker** comes face-to-stiched-face with the legendary Monster of Frankenstein! *2.99*

X-MEN

ON SALE JUNE 3

CABLE NO. 57
JOE CASEY/RYAN BENJAMIN/MATT BANNING
Cable's powers are altered dramatically—and not for the better! *1.99*

MAVERICK NO. 12
JORGE GONZALEZ/JIMMY CHEUNG & LEO FERNANDEZ/ANDREW PEPOY
Double-barreled, double-sized last issue! Maverick, the **Red Guardian** and the former **Soviet Super-Soldiers** stage a final showdown against **Ivan Pushkin** and the forces of **A.I.M.**! *2.99*

UNCANNY X-MEN NO. 358
STEVE SEAGLE/CHRIS BACHALO
Poised to carry out **Cyclops'** bold new plans, the five original **X-Men** are shocked when **Phoenix** collapses! Plus: when their love goes wrong, will **Bishop** and **Deathbird** take it out on each other?! *1.99*

ON SALE JUNE 10

GENERATION X NO. 41
COVER BY TERRY DODSON & RACHAEL DODSON
LARRY HAMA/ALE GARZA/CALEB SALSTROM
Jubilee's been watching too many horror flicks, and now she's stuck in a night-mare that's a real *Scream*! *1.99*

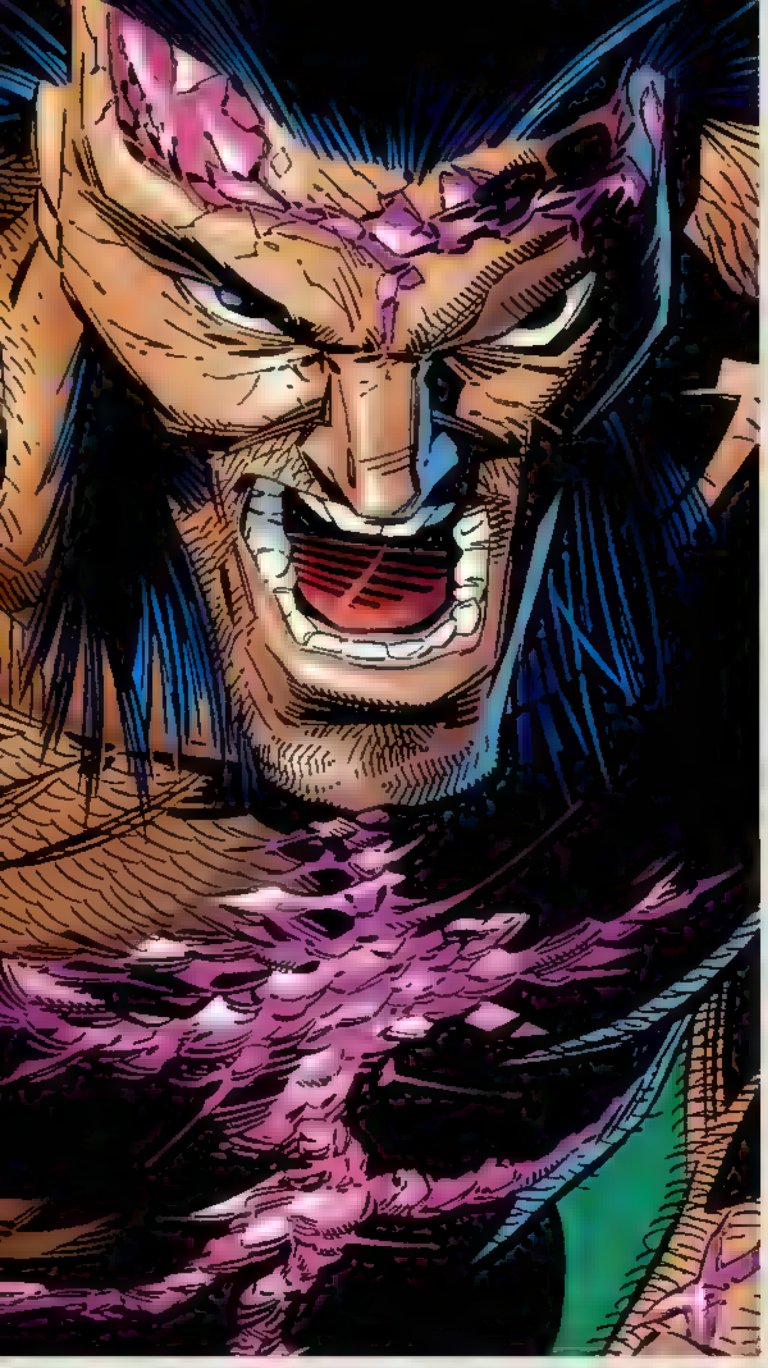
PINT-SIZED X-BABIES: MURDERAMA
RUBEN DIAZ/J.J. KIRBY
Those lovable, Mojo-made, miniature, misfit mutants are back! Created by **Mojo** as the ultimate form of action-entertainment, the **X-Babies**, like the people they're based on, are heroes through and through. *2.99*

X-FACTOR NO. 148
JOSEPH HARRIS/MIKE MILLER/NGHIA LAM
Spotlight on Shard! Encountering a teenage boy accused of being a mutant, Shard enters a hot zone of hatred! *1.99*

ON SALE JUNE 17

EXCALIBUR NO. 123
BEN RAAB/TREVOR SCOTT
Excalibur vs. Mimic—the mutant with all the powers of the original X-Men! Searching for **Professor X**, the team finds themselves pitted against a nearly unbeatable opponent—who now has *their* powers as well! *1.99*

WHAT IF? NO. 111 STARRING WOLVERINE
TOM DEFALCO/ADAM DEKRAKER
"What If Wolverine Became A Horseman Of Apocalypse?" When the maniacal mutant named **En Sabah Nur** chooses **Logan** to be one of his feared Four Horsemen, the face of the Marvel Universe undergoes a drastic—and unexpected—change! Can a world ruled by Apocalypse actually become a world of peace? And what would the price of that peace be? The answer is in the hands—and claws—of the mutant formerly known as Wolverine! *1.99*



ON SALE JUNE 17

X-MAN NO. 41
COVER BY CHRIS CROSS
TERRY KAVANAGH/ROGER CRUZ/BUD LAROSA
A new direction! New characters! The return of Roger Cruz! It's an X-MAN renaissance! ... *1.99*

X-MEN NO. 78
JOE KELLY/GERMAN GARCIA
At long last—the return of Professor X! Due to the effects of the EMP wave (released last issue) the Psionic plane has a new ruler—and his name is the **Shadow King**! ... *1.99*

ON SALE JUNE 24

MARVEL ANNUAL '98 STARRING: X-MAN & THE HULK
WRAPAROUND COVER BY CHRIS CROSS
TERRY KAVANAGH/CHRIS CROSS/CAESAR
X-Man! The Hulk! Thanos! 'Nuff said!Oh, you want more? Okay: rolling out of his last appearance in KA-ZAR, Thanos makes a momentous return, with (of course) diabolical plans for Earth! ... *2.99*

WOLVERINE NO. 127
CHRIS CLAREMONT/LIENEL FRANCIS YU
Who won last month's throwdown between Wolverine & Sabretooth?! Well, we don't want to spoil the surprise, but let's just say that in this issue, Sabretooth takes over! ... *1.99*

X-FORCE NO. 80
JOHN FRANCIS MOORE/ADAM POLLINA/MARK MORALES
The final battle: X-Force vs. Reignfire! It's been building for over a year, now get ready for the final, fiery showdown as the mysterious man who claims to be the real Reignfire slams head-on into our group of fugitives! ... *1.99*

Nickelodeon's 1998 Kids' Choice Awards

SCORECARD

The votes are in... Who will win?

Find out! Tune in and keep score as thousands of kids, lots of stars, and host **Rosie O'Donnell** celebrate kids' favorites in TV, movies, music, sports and more. It all comes to you **LIVE* from Hollywood!**

FAVORITE MOVIE ACTRESS
- ☐ Alicia Silverstone
- ☐ Uma Thurman
- ☐ Christina Ricci
- ☐ Beverly D'Angelo

FAVORITE MOVIE
- ☐ Men in Black
- ☐ Liar Liar
- ☐ Titanic
- ☐ Batman & Robin

FAVORITE TEAM
- ☐ Chicago Bulls
- ☐ Green Bay Packers
- ☐ San Francisco 49ers
- ☐ Atlanta Braves

FAVORITE GROUP
- ☐ Spice Girls
- ☐ Backstreet Boys
- ☐ No Doubt
- ☐ Hanson

FAVORITE SINGER
- ☐ Puff Daddy
- ☐ Will Smith
- ☐ Mariah Carey
- ☐ Celine Dion

KEEP SCORE WHILE YOU WATCH!

FAVORITE MOVIE ACTOR
- ☐ Jim Carrey
- ☐ Will Smith
- ☐ Tim Allen
- ☐ Robin Williams

NICKELODEON

11th Annual

Kids' Choice® Awards

FAVORITE SONG
- ☐ Men in Black
- ☐ I'll Be Missing You
- ☐ Don't Speak
- ☐ MMMBop

FAVORITE TV ACTRESS
- ☐ Brandy
- ☐ Tia & Tamera Mowry
- ☐ Melissa Joan Hart
- ☐ Kirstie Alley

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- ☐ Kenan Thompson & Kel Mitchell
- ☐ Jonathan Taylor Thomas

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- ☐ Kenan & Kel
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- ☐ Home Improvement

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PRODUCT SPOTLIGHTS

Bowen Designs

THE MIGHTY THOR MINI BUST

Most archeologists will tell you that you'd have to be one patient scientist to dig up sculpture of an ancient god, but they'd be wrong. Randy Bowen, although not an ancient sculptor, has produced a unique new statue that will have fans digging not through dirt, but through their wallets to buy this masterful bust of Thor, God of Thunder! In addition to creating a stunning likeness of Odin's #1 son, Bowen has also succeeded in including his mighty hammer into the sculpture by using it as its base! Fully-painted and ready for display, the statue is limited to initial orders received.

Suggested Retail Price $50.00

For Complete Ordering Information, Please See The June Edition Of Previews.

Illusive Con

SPIDER-MAN 3D DUAL DISPLAY COLLECTIBLE

Leaping out from the skyscrapers of New York City, Marvel Comics' Amazing Spider-Man Collectible captures all the excitement of the wondrous web-slinger. The mesmerizing perspective draws you into this unique three-dimensional rendition, a great addition to any collection as a tabletop or wall hanging.

- Three-dimensional wall art collectible captures Spider-Man's kinetic pose!
- Sculpted from reference provided by Marvel!
- Based on the cover to SPIDER-MAN #44, March 1994, by Tom Lyle!
- Includes a Proof of Authenticity!
- An eighteen month production run!
- Dual Display design: stand it on a table or hang it on a wall!

Suggested Retail Price $80.00

For Complete Ordering Information, Please See The June Edition Of Previews.

Highland Mint

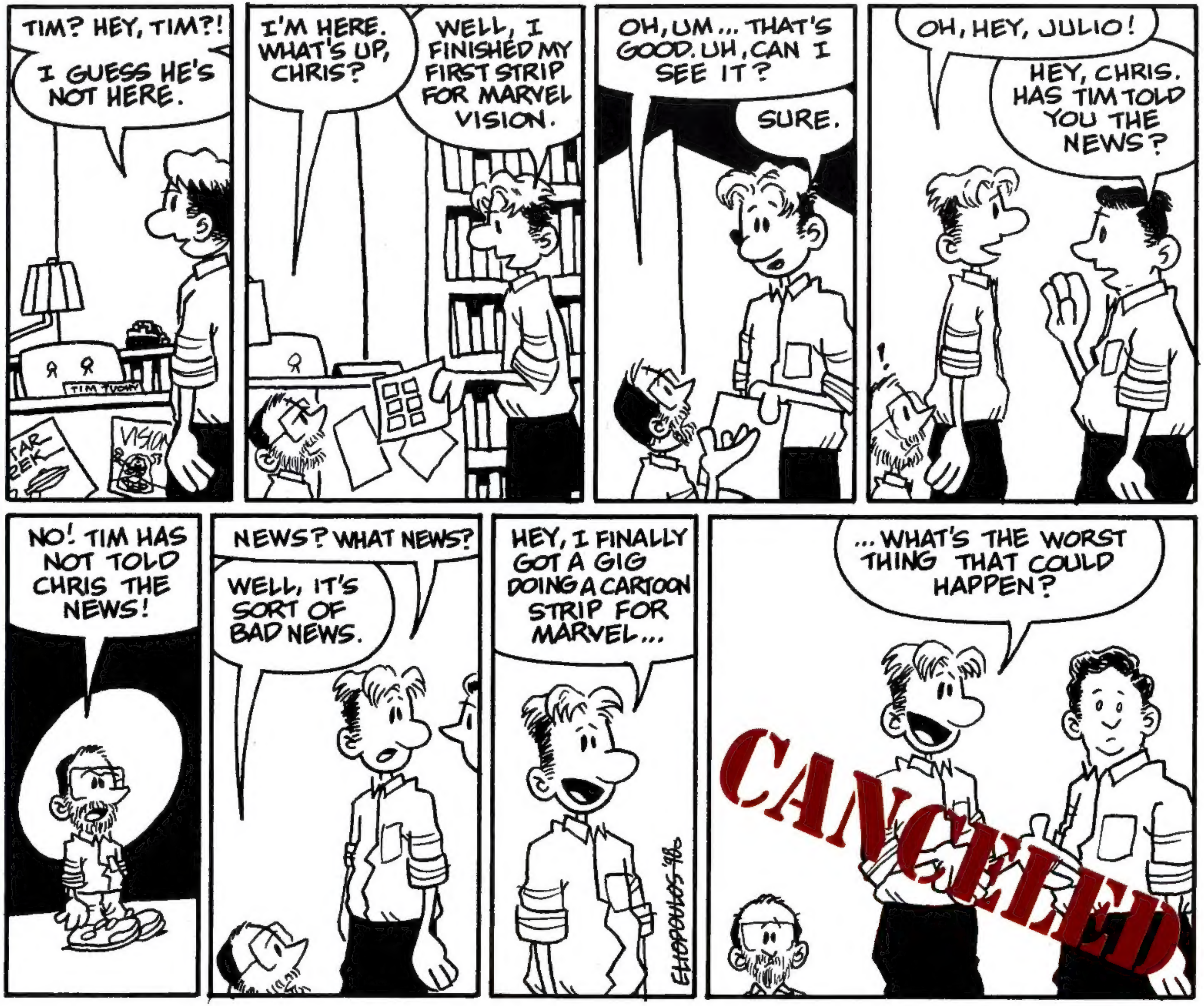
MARVEL SUPER HERO SILVER MEDALLIONS

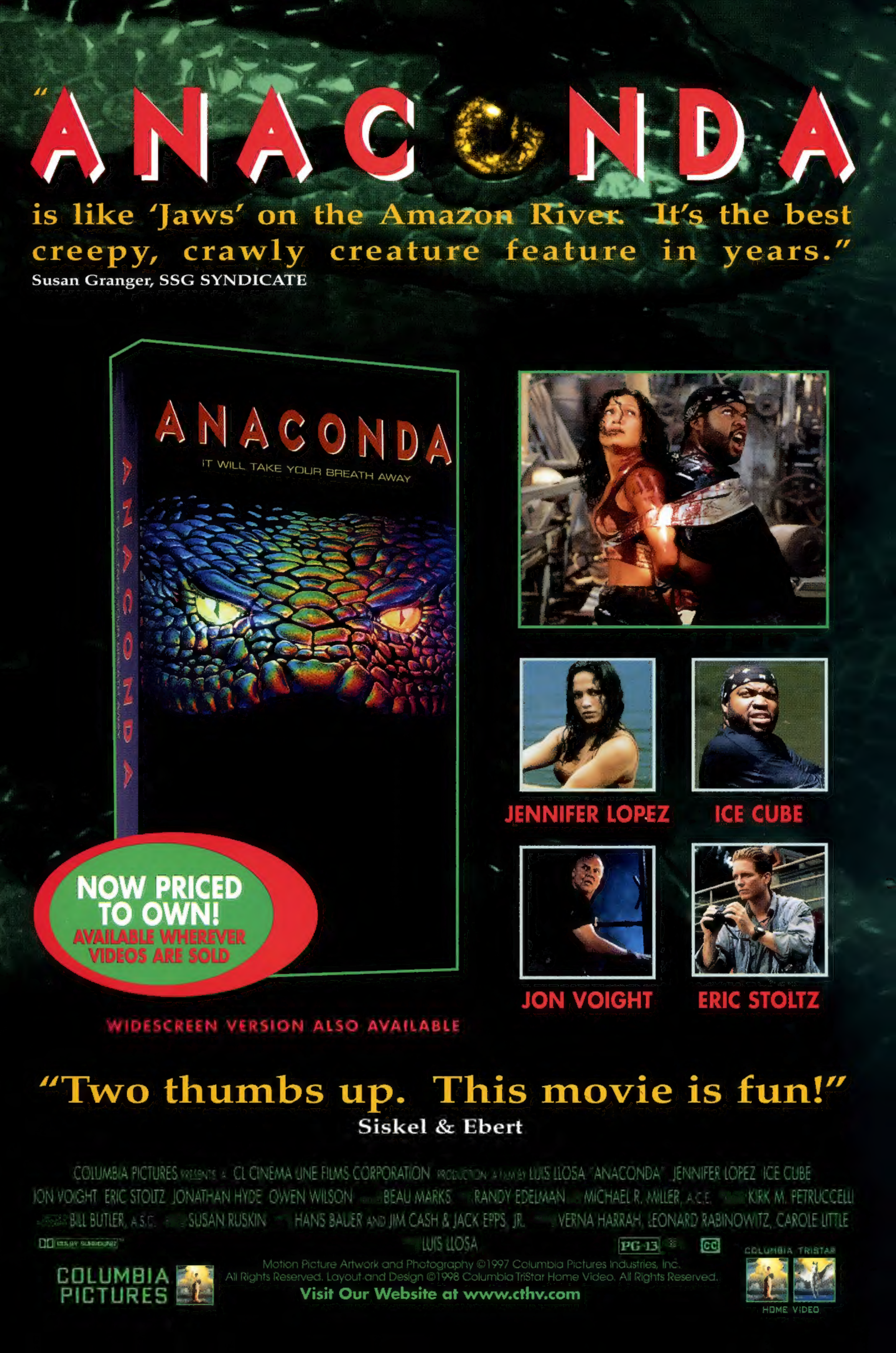
Highland Mint and Marvel immortalize the Golden Avenger and the God of Thunder as silver medallions! The Iron Man coin features the art of Sean Chen while the Thor coin features the art of John Romita Jr. Each medallion is made of 1 troy ounce of pure silver and limited to a mintage of 5,000. Accompanied by a serialized certificate of authenticity, each medallion is individually numbered, encased in a protective capsule and displayed in a velvet jewel box. Thor and Iron Man: now that's what we call *champ* change!

THE OFFICE
BY
CHRIS
ELIOPOULOS

AFTER THIRTY FUN ISSUES OF MARVEL VISION, JULIO AND I BID YOU FAREWELL. WE HOPE YOU KEEP READING AND ENJOYING MARVEL COMICS AS MUCH AS WE DO!

...TIM & JULIO

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"Two thumbs up. This movie is fun!"
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